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[SAVED FROM THE EXPLOSION.]

THE FLAW IN THE DIAMOND.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Miss Arlington's Will," "Leaves of Fate," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XV.

THE little street between the bookstall and the planing mill presented an exciting and sickening scene. The moment the clouds of dust, steam, and flying fragments passed away, there were, of course, people hurrying from all sides to the rescue of the sufferers.

Morley Ashton, at the moment of the explosion, had been on the side-walk, just in range of the chaise in which Mabel sat, with her shining, interested eyes on the children, who were dancing across the street, with their pennies grasped tightly in their little dusty hands.

With the thunder burst and roar, a great stone came flying over as if hurled from a cannon's mouth, and struck horse, shaft, and a portion of the chaise, tossing it, as if it had been a feather, on to the side-walk fronting the bookstall, and burying in its wreck the form of the Honourable Mr. Ashton, with that of the unconscious girl.

The glossy-flanked, noble horse, pawing impatiently behind, was felled as if by a lightning stroke, and stirred no muscle afterward. That attached to the chaise lay tumbled over on his side, only making a feeble effort to right himself.

Mabel did not know when a strong arm lifted her out of the debris, and carried her across the way, but her consciousness was just returning, in answer to the vigorous chafing of her hands, and a dash of cold water into her face, when Abiatha Broad's voice, shrill and high with excitement, was heard demanding:

"Where is she? where is the poor lamb? Oh! heaven have mercy, and grant that she is not killed!"

Another voice, with the clear, even modulations of refinement, answered for her, as the girl's mind was seeking painfully and intensely to gather strength and coherence enough for a reply.

"She is here, sir. I think she is not injured beyond the shock and fright. She will recover in a moment. Do not frighten her."

Mabel, by this time, had opened her eyes, and those soft, dark orbs, so full of wistful pathos, of unfathomed splendours and unsounded depths, looked straight up into Mr. Ashton's face.

The gentleman's hat was gone, his curly locks were full of dust and little bits of straw; his linen and coat were soiled; but the pale, noble face, with its kindled expression of power and earnestness, had never looked more like that of a hero. Half unconscious still of what she was doing, Mabel looked on, and smiled slowly—a rare, wondrously sweet, trustful smile, that was somehow full of a still richer and lovelier promise.

A pink flush crept into Morley Ashton's forehead, a spark shot across the eagle eyes, and then softened into a mist that was very like a tear.

He put back a damp lock from her pale forehead, and said gently:

"You are better now."

Mabel rested a moment, somehow too blissfully contented to make the slightest exertion to come out of her dreamy half-consciousness. The Quaker bonnet lay crushed beneath her, the drab shawl had been torn away from her fair throat. The long hair, which might have been called black as the raven's wing but for its rich gloss, had escaped from its confinement, and was waving around her shoulders, rippling softly across the strong arm which still supported her. But of all this she realised nothing, nor had she the slightest knowledge of the explosion.

"The poor little children," she murmured, "how happy you have made them! But that is a princely right. I suppose it was granted at your birth."

He looked surprised, possibly a little pained, and turned a startled glance behind him, where Abiatha stood breathless and watchful.

"Do you think I have hurt?" he asked, in a whisper.

Mabel half-raised herself, but still did not move her eyes from his face.

"I never saw a king before," she said gently, and then a little contraction knit her forehead. "I wonder are heroes always perfect? I cannot bear to think so, else how should they smile so kindly as you do on erring and weakly mortals."

Mr. Ashton hastily wrung out his handkerchief, and laid it, dripping with water, on her head.

But Abiatha Broad at this juncture thrust himself between.

"Mabel, child, thou wast thrown out of the chaise and stunned. Wilt thou tell us how much thou art hurt?" said he, in a dry, measured voice, very different from that he had used when searching for her, before he discovered that she was in the Honourable Mr. Ashton's care.

The great dark eyes looked, with a swift astonishment growing in them, to the Quaker's face. In a moment more she lifted herself, colouring faintly, from Mr. Ashton's arm, and spoke in her natural voice.

"What is the matter? What has happened?"

"A terrible thing, but, heaven be praised, thou art safe, though it seems only as by a miracle."

She had looked about her now, and saw the hurrying groups, bearing burdens covered with some hastily improvised pall.

"Oh, sir, there has been some dreadful accident. I remember now the frightful noise. Those children, those poor little children, where are they? Don't stay with me, any of you. I shall be well in a moment, and come myself to help you."

"The dear little children indeed!" answered Morley Ashton, with a shudder, remembering the horrible glance he had obtained of two mangled bodies, and a golden head, all crushed and gory. "If you are really recovered, I will go and see where I can be of service."

Abiatha gave her his support, and Mabel walked presently into the adjoining house, and sat down on the doorstep. No one paid them any attention, for all were gathered around the ruined building, digging fiercely, to rescue the poor creatures in the basement, whose frantic shouts came up, hoarse and muffled, amidst the shrieks of the wounded.

"Help here, someone bear a hand to revive this poor soul," cried out the foreman of the working gang, as a bruised body was drawn out, and passed along the string.

"Go," said the girl, as Abiatha Broad took a step forward, and then fell back.

"It is a sickening sight. Thou must give me a drop of the gentleman's wine," said he, leaning against the wall of the building, and speaking in weak, wavering accents.

Mabel looked round and saw a gentleman's hunting flask with silver cap, projecting from the pocket of the little under-jacket she wore beneath her shawl. She took it out and passed it on.

Abiatha drank with nervous eagerness, dropped it back into her lap, and walked off, but with faltering steps, and the glimpse of his cheek under the broad brim showed it to be ashen pale.

"How different men are," thought Mabel. "A hero of mine could never be a Quaker! It is so different from the young gentleman. He looked as if born for, and capable of, braving any danger."

And then she felt a momentary compunction, and accused herself both of folly and ingratitude.

She took a little wine herself, walked a step or two unaided, and then sat down, with her face turned from the scene of disaster, getting her strength with every inspiration of air blowing over her.

Morley Ashton, working with the most earnest of the crowd, on turning round to wipe away the dripping beads of perspiration, saw her sitting along the ghastly row where the fatally injured were laid out. He watched her a moment with grave attention.

She stooped here and there, tenderly adjusting the distorted features, closing the staring eyes or the gaping lips, wiping off blood and dust, and decently arranging the garments. He knew what was in her mind; to lessen a little of the shock when the friends should come, to deal as tenderly as possible with those to whom this sharp disaster had been so cruel. When his assistance was no longer needed amid the ruins, he went out to her, and came up softly, as who was dabbling her handkerchief in the very pitcher of water which the children had used, washing off, with a wistful compassion in her eyes, the thick coagulation around a fatal wound in one of the children's golden heads.

He stood beside her silently, and then a heavy sigh came chokingly from him.

"Oh," said he, "if I could only help thinking that, had I left them there in the old yard, they might have been safe. See, the frail, brittle pitcher was not harmed, and these poor little walls of humanity were sent, by my cruel charity, out into the streets to their death. Oh! it is hard, bitter hard."

"It was no fault of yours," said Mabel, pityingly, "but you intended to be generous, and beneficent."

"A woful beneficence!" he answered drearily. "How many were killed?"

"I find only three. The other frightened little creatures must have run off to their homes. See, do you remember this one? I saw you select her because she looked so weak and sickly, and silly put a shilling instead of the sixpence. Look!"

She lifted the little waxen hand which her tender care had washed clear from the dust, and showed the tiny fingers still clenched in a death-grasp over the bright silver coin.

"Oh!" said Morley Ashton, in a voice which betrayed how his heart was rent by the sight; "the ways of heaven are indeed inscrutable! Poor little morsel of humanity, cut off in this cruel way, perhaps in the first moment of unalloyed delight, how hard, how bitter hard it seems!"

"Earthly silver must look very poor and base up there in the golden streets of heaven," said Mabel, softly; "who knows what she is saved from? To the best of us life sometimes looks poor and worthless, what might it not have brought to her? An angel safe in heaven now, and the last moment of earthly consciousness was beautiful. You were, I daresay, with your gracious presence and your generous gift, such a beautiful contrast to the misery and harshness of her home, that you served to break the too sudden glory of the opening heavens."

Morley Ashton was looking earnestly into the rapt, inward-illuminated countenance.

"You think I shall be spared a mother's anguished reproaches?" he asked, under his breath.

"I do. Look at her clothing, and the poor little matted curls. No mother could neglect a child with a face like hers, however depraved she might be. I feel as certain, as if I had been told, that the mother is up above, and rejoicing now over her darling's everlasting safety."

"How unlike other girls," thought Morley Ashton, and somehow the remembrance of Ada Donnithorne's blooming beauty did not bring its accustomed thrill. "Well," he added, audibly, "I must make enquiries; these poor little creatures shall have respectable burial, and whether there be worthy parents, or not,

one mourner will be there, to see the souls heaped upon their innocent heads."

Mabel was folding the tiny waxen hands across the pulseless breast.

"I would leave the coin there," she said, "and if only I had a handful of violets, or rosebuds, I would cover over that wound."

"There shall be plenty of flowers for you," he answered, quickly; "if the poor little things have no natural guardians, I should like to have you go with me to their graves. There will then be a woman's tender tear to bedew their memory. I see Mason yonder. I will set him to finding the identity of the three, and then I can decide about the matter."

He hurried away from her, and was soon in anxious consultation with a group of men.

Mabel presently was aware that Abiatha Broad was looking after her, and she went away to meet him.

"Thou must come away now," he said, "the crowds are gathering, as the news of the disaster spreads. I should prefer to go home. Art thou able to walk that distance, for though the poor beast who brought us is not seriously injured, the chaise is broken, and unfit for service. I have sent them both to their owner. Thou hast lost thy veil somewhere, but pull on the bonnet farther, and let us go."

Mabel could not say why she did not allow her kind friend to see the reluctance with which she turned away; she only answered simply:

"If there be no more help to be given, I am ready to go."

"Fresh people are continually arriving. It is a harrowing sight; I would fain be at home," answered Abiatha.

Mabel made no appeal. She took his arm silently, and they walked slowly away. She was not destined to leave, however, without another word with the gentleman, of whose identity she had still no suspicion.

He was standing looking on, while one of his servants, who had come flying to the scene of disaster, in frantic alarm at the reported injury of his master, was dragging away the black horse, who had been instantly killed.

He turned round to Mabel with a sad smile.

"See!" said he, "a trusty friend gone; for whom I might have been weak enough to shed many bitter tears, but for the saddest sight ever yonder."

Mabel left Abiatha's arm a step or two, and looked over at the dead animal.

"Poor fellow! I remember how proudly he came down the street. I do not know how I shall comfort you in this case. If he were a tried companion I don't think another in his place will be very soon the same."

"No. Selim was too trusty to be lightly replaced. Such affection as his, so true and real, is not lightly won. But there is comfort, and I see it myself. That terrible iron rod, which felled him, might have gone a dozen paces below, and then it would have fallen upon you, and better that the whole race of Selim should be exterminated."

Mabel did not reply for a moment. Those dark, unfathomable eyes were raised slowly, searchingly it seemed, up into the heavens. A wistful smile that had more grief than mirth curled her lips; her voice was sadly dreary.

"I do not know; one cannot judge of such things. It is a great deal to be safely anchored, and rest is very sweet."

He had no time to question her meaning, as his surprised looks seemed to indicate was his intention, for Abiatha Broad stepped forward, almost rudely she thought, and drew her away.

CHAPTER XVI

WHILE that sickening scene was enacted in the vicinity of the planing mill, Mark Daly and his fair pupil in equestrianism, were coming cantering over a breezy upland, gay and happy in their own unconsciousness of danger or evil.

"Oh! take care, Miss Donnithorne, that was very careless of you. Supposing the horse had tossed his head, you would have lost the reins entirely," expostulated Mark.

Ada shook her curls rebelliously.

"I am not afraid. I wanted to tie a better knot in my ribbons. Would you recommend me to take the reins in my mouth while I am using my hands?"

"I am afraid Sir Anson would call me a very remiss teacher if he saw you practising either. Somebody is all at once remarkably brave."

She laughed defiantly.

"To be sure. Why shouldn't I be? Especially when such a knight of the reins is by my side. But you need not fear papa's censure. I heard him yesterday telling Mr. Ashton that I was improving wonderfully. Mr. Ashton gave me a gentle invitation to accompany him in a trial to-day, but I remem-

bered how we had arranged for this trip to the old castle, and I excused myself somehow."

"I can't say whether I am most surprised or honoured. I certainly can't compliment your taste in accepting my escort, when you can have Mr. Ashton's."

"How very fond you are of him," said Ada, looking down, and flipping the glossy flank beneath her with her silken-tasselled riding-whip.

"And as proud as fond. I think him the noblest, most perfect man of my acquaintance."

"So does everybody, I believe," said Ada, with a momentary curl of her scarlet lip; "but confess the truth, don't you find it a little chilling; are you not a little, just a little, you know, afraid of such perfection?"

"I stand in awe, possibly, as a leal subject must before his country's king. I should not be afraid to ask his help in any good work, or his compassion for any woe."

Ada shrugged her graceful shoulders.

"I am not afraid of you, Mr. Mark Daly, and I am going to free my mind once, and I believe I take delight in it, because I know you will think it just such black treason as mamma and papa do. I don't care what you say, all of you. I think there is such a thing as too great perfection for common mortals, and I find Mr. Ashton— tiresome and prosy. There!"

"Oh! Miss Donnithorne, a mind so profound and wise as Mr. Ashton's!"

She gave a long, lugubrious sigh, though her blue eyes, under their lowered golden lashes, kept their mischief concealed.

"That's just it—altogether too wise and profound for me. I expect I am very simple and very wicked, but I declare the other day, when he was giving a long and brilliant description of what would be done for England, when he and his party came into power, I had to keep my handkerchief up to hide my yawns. And I kept wishing he would talk as you do, about pictures, music, the opera, and the last ball, anything that my poor little shallow brain could understand, and get some faint idea of what ought to be said in answer."

Then she lifted up her eyes to his, and burst into a merry peal of laughter.

"Now, tell me how much you pity and despise me."

"Despise you! Oh, Miss Donnithorne!" returned Mark, eagerly, and then a wave of passionate emotion broke his voice. "You know, you know, without my telling you, that I never saw anyone before whom I so much admired and respected, and—"

He could not get any farther, but broke down entirely.

The girl tossed back the snowy spray of the dancing plume in her blue velvet riding-cap, and looked over to him, with her violet eyes soft with sympathy, her red lips tender with smiles.

"Then you must not scold me," she said, archly, "I am not afraid of you—oh! not the least bit afraid of you, Mr. Daly, but I don't like to be scolded."

Mark was looking at the bewitching little fairy with wistful eyes, though they were not yet open to the knowledge of the fatal brink towards which he was hastening.

"I have wondered many a time," he said, "if you knew what a change it made in my life, coming to Chardon Valley. I think you ought to know how grateful I am for all this kindness; how my heart has seemed to blossom out of its chill and dreariness, as the spring brings the earth from the snows of winter. I was so dreary, so forlorn before. In my dreams I found such gracious friends as I have made here, but it only made the waking more forlorn."

"You have never told me about yourself in that respect," said Ada. "Was your childhood spent also in that queer, romantic India?"

"Oh, no, the first I can remember was of living on a seacoast somewhere. It must have been in England or Scotland. I was too young to be able to recall any positive impressions, but I remember distinctly making houses in the sand, and seeing the sea come up and take them away, and of piling up shells, myself and another."

"I thought you had no brother or sister," observed Ada, watching furtively the varying shades of emotion on the ingenuous face.

"And this was neither," said Mark, thoughtfully, "but perhaps I loved her as well. Poor Ball! I wonder where your feet are wandering now?"

"It was a girl then?" commented Miss Donnithorne, playing again with her whip. "Was she pretty?"

Mark smiled, and brightened out of his abstraction.

"A woman's question. It is rather difficult to answer, for a boy of seven is hardly a judge of such matters. I know we were very close friends, and that I cried bitterly when we were separated. I

suppose I might meet her now and never suspect it. It is curious to think about. And I remember how many times we sat out of the same porringer, and cried ourselves to sleep out of the same whispering."

"Oh, how terrible!" cried Ada, shivering with horror.

Mark smiled mournfully.

"There were more terrible things than the whippings. We were two little forsaken children, and yet I think, after a fashion, we contrived to find a little happiness. But it was a blessed day for me when good Ruth Weston came and carried me away. Yet I remember how I mourned for Bell—poor Bell! I should like to know her fate. She was a great deal to me in those forlorn times."

"I am sorry that you have not a pleasant childhood to look back upon. It seems very hard and strange to me," murmured Ada.

"Ah, indeed it may," replied Mark, warmly, you cannot even guess at poor Bell's trials, you whose path has been so carefully shaded from even too glaring a sunshine, who have not guessed the roughness of the road for the softening carpets and the wreathing flowers. But it is right, Ah, Miss Donnithorne, the sunshine and the beauty of the world may well be the portion of one so bright and beautiful herself. Never may you find a change."

"And you, Mr. Daly, have, I trust, passed through all the clouds."

"I thank you. I confess I cherish such a hope myself. Mr. Ashton has been pleased to intrust to me many important affairs, and has praised my efforts so much that I am almost as silly as a child in the midst of a fairy legend. I picture to myself all kinds of honourable and rapid advancement. Indeed I have his lordship's promise of a lucrative and honourable post as soon as a vacancy occurs. I mean to work zealously, to deserve the kindness of my generous patrons, and to place myself in such a position that you, Miss Donnithorne, need not be ashamed of my acquaintance."

"As if that could ever be," said Ada, and dropped the golden lashes again.

By this time they had emerged from the cross road upon the highway.

A group of men were hurrying along, with the evident appearance of great excitement.

Spurring up, the pair overtook them, and Mark enquired what was amiss.

"Oh! it's Miss Donnithorne, her that was to marry him!" ejaculated the boor, staring up into Ada's face. "She ought to know. They say, sir, as how the engine at the planing mill blowed up just now and has killed lots of men, but the best of the town among 'em. They say Mr. Morley Ashton was riding just opposite, and he and his horse be both killed as dead as can be."

"Great heavens!" ejaculated Mark, while Ada gave a little cry of horror certainly, and yet she drew a long long breath after it.

"Let us ride swiftly. Miss Donnithorne, turn your horse nearer to mine, where I can reach his rein if it be needed. Dead! dead! Morley Ashton dead!" exclaimed Mark, hoarsely.

Ada Donnithorne had not a word to say. The two horses went on, side by side, at a sharp canter; two pale faces were looking almost fiercely forward. In a little time they came upon a group of shrieking women, wringing their hands wildly, at a cottage door. Then beyond, on the white winding road, was a short procession. The still length borne between four men told its own story. Mark Daly bit his lips to keep down the rising sob. All he saw was this man he had so loyally served, so thoroughly admired, and loved, the country's idol, the hope of the whole kingdom, lying still—cold—dead!

Ada Donnithorne leaned over her saddle and cried out, with a child's grieved terror:

"Oh, Mark, I am so frightened. Don't leave me when we pass them, will you?"

Mark turned his white face towards her, but she did not catch a sound, although his lips moved. As they neared the scene of disaster, the pitiable evidences of the truth of the report multiplied.

Ada was crying bitterly under her veil, half with horror, partly with terror at the strange look of her companion's face.

A longer procession, with more evidences of care and attention, appeared behind the shorter groups.

"What is that behind," asked he, huskily, of a man who was holding the head of a wounded, battered wreck, in which life was not yet extinct.

"That—that, I think, be Mr. Ashton's bier," replied the man.

Mark turned to his companion.

"Miss Donnithorne, you must not meet it. No one can tell how heartrending it may be. I do not think I shall bear it manfully myself. Let me turn your horse aside. You can take that cross street, and one of these men shall lead the horse."

"No, oh no," cried Ada, bursting into a wild sob,

"you mustn't leave me, Mark. I shall die with terror if you leave me, Mark."

He looked at her almost wildly.

"Miss Donnithorne, my brain is all in a whirl. It may be wicked, I feel as if it were the cruellest ingratitude in me, but I cannot think clearly, unless you answer me one question. That man said, he implied—that you were Mr. Ashton's betrothed. It is strange I have never heard a word of this! Answer me, please, is it true?"

Poor, weak Ada, half terrified out of her senses, quite writhed at his behaviour, pulled off the dainty kid gauntlet from her hand, and held it up, with the diamond engagement ring sparkling, in mocking splendour, on her finger, and said, confusedly:

"Oh, Mark, it is his ring, but I did not know—I could not help it. I never loved him after I knew you."

Mark turned his half-blinded eyes towards the coming procession, and then dashed his hands across them wildly.

That tall, straight figure, with its imitable grace and dignity, walking with uncovered head beside three little waxen figures—who was it?

Mark Daly forgot Ada Donnithorne—forgot the wild, dizzying thoughts that held a thrill of bliss through all their stinging pain, he had no thought for anything else after one glance into that grave, pallid face.

He spurred the horse forward. He leaped from the saddle, he bent down on one knee and seized the gentleman's hand, while all his pent-up passion burst forth in one hot flood of tears.

"Safe! Mr. Ashton! Oh, I call heaven to witness, I could not be more glad if my own life had been on its last gasp, and had been miraculously restored," he stammered, with all a boy's fervour and impetuosity.

"My dear Mark, my warm-hearted friend, what have you heard?" said Mr. Ashton, laying his hand lightly on the graceful shoulder.

"They said you were killed! Oh, sir, we cannot thank heaven enough for its mercy."

"My dear boy, do you give me such generous affection? Would that I deserved it," said Mr. Ashton, deeply affected. "I hope no such false rumour has gone to my mother."

"I hope not, sir, and I dare say it has not. I heard it on the road. I was out riding, attending Miss Donnithorne."

"Oh, is Ada there! Let us move on. Poor child, she will be deeply affected by this woful sight."

And they advanced towards the young lady, who sat motionless on her horse, overpowered by a sudden, and perhaps not unnatural, revulsion of feeling. Ada Donnithorne was not used to so much agitation. The terrible shock of believing Mr. Ashton suddenly stricken down, so suddenly removed, awoke a certain feeling of indignation and injury in this petted child of fortune. Besides, she was vexed and hurt at Mark Daly's devotion to his patron, jealous of his fervour of affection, and believed she had a right to resent his sudden desertion, leaving her there alone on the roadside, and rushing forward to throw himself at Morley Ashton's feet in that absurd fashion.

She lifted her head proudly as they approached, and kept her veil down.

"My dear Ada, I hope you have not been uneasy," said Morley Ashton, walking towards her, and taking the hand that dropped listlessly to the saddle-cloth. "This is a very melancholy and shocking calamity."

"Yes, I suppose so. I am very glad you are not hurt. Have you seen any of your people about? I am wearied out, and want to get home as quickly as possible. I needn't trouble Mr. Daly any farther," answered she, carelessly, almost flippantly, "perhaps you will go."

Morley Ashton, fresh from the fervent sympathy of the pale-faced girl, with those soulful, magnetic eyes, experienced a new feeling—it was almost disgust.

"Is she, indeed, so harmless?" he asked himself. And he pointed almost sternly towards the little, marble-white, childish form on the bier.

"Do you see those innocent little creatures, Ada? I am taking them home to their parents or friends. Can you ask me to desert from such a mournful duty, to play the gallant to a tired lady? It is not half-amie to the hall, and the road will be lined with people."

While he said it, he fell back into his place by the bier and gave a signal for the men to move on.

Ada, with her eyes filling with angry tears, gave her horse a nervous jerk. He reared a little, and bounded forward.

Mark was by her side in a moment.

"You are angry with me, Miss Donnithorne," he said, sorrowfully, "but I cannot imagine why."

Simple little Ada finished the day's blunder, when she replied impetuously.

"You do not care for me. You left me to go to him. You ought to have been sorry, but instead of being so, you were glad, though you knew I told you—that if he lived, I must marry him."

CHAPTER XVII.

MABEL and Abiatha hurried home as fast as possible, and neither spoke at all during the walk.

Abiatha's keen gray eye now and then turned with curious interest to the girl's abstracted face, but he divulged nothing of the thoughts deduced by this observation.

He sat down, with a long sigh of relief, the moment he reached the sitting-room, and began slowly unbuttoning the gray coat, which now for the first time, Mabel noticed, was closed to the very chin, and had some dark stain upon it.

She was putting away her bonnet, when she saw him waver, while his face grew ghastly pale.

"Oh, sir, you are ill, you are faint," she cried, in keen alarm, rushing back to him, and performing the work his limp, nerveless fingers were unable to accomplish.

She uttered a renewed cry of terror. The waistcoat beneath was wet, saturated through and through with blood.

"Oh! you are hurt, you are hurt, and never told of it! What shall I do for you?"

She was tearing open the waistcoat to reach the wound, but Abiatha, feeble as he was, struggled backward from her hold.

"A little water," faltered he. "It is all I need."

Mabel brought it, and held it to his pallid lips.

"Now I am better," said the Quaker, presently.

"Very much better. If thou wilt bring me a roll of old linen thou wilt find over there in the drawer, and a card of the plaster in the medicine chest, thou may'st go and leave me."

Mabel flew to them, and brought them, in silence.

"A piece of the splintered door struck me," said he, again smiling at her face of consternation. "It is only a scratch, I presume, but my exertions set the blood in motion. I will soon attend to it. Go, my child, and take a little rest thyself."

The girl obeyed him, for she perceived his evident wish for her absence. She came again into the room with the first excuse that offered, and was relieved to find him, with a brighter look, and clean clothing, sitting by the window.

"It was nothing very bad, I hope?" she said.

"Not in the least—and only think what it might have been." He shuddered as he spoke, and passed his hand across his forehead. "Heaven has been very merciful this day, my child, with thee and me. It would have meant more than the mere dying, for either of us to have been taken to-day."

Mabel scarcely understood his meaning, but she forbore to question him.

"Thou may'st give me a cup of tea presently. I have need to go down the street again. Such lessons as this of ours today should not pass unheeded. One should do their best to get the house in order for the bridegroom's coming."

And he leaned his head again on his hand, and fell into a deep reverie.

Mabel went out to her light task, and had the table ready for him before he lifted his grave face.

"It has been such a long, long day," said the girl presently, with a low sigh. "It seems to me it has held the experience of months."

"What, for thee too," he questioned, and looked searchingly into her eyes.

But they were fixed on the window, dreamily.

"We have seen all sides of human nature," he continued, "its weakness, its strength, and its mystery."

"And its beauty and glory," said Mabel, softly, still with far-away eyes. "I have seen a hero to-day, such a hero as I have dreamed about, but believed too godlike for human expression."

Abiatha broadened his lips, and flung out his hand impatiently.

"Thou art like all the rest," he muttered, angrily; "what hero dost thou mean—who was he?"

"I do not know his name," she answered, colouring faintly. "I think it must have been a nobleman."

Abiatha walked away from the table, and took up the broad-brimmed hat.

"I will go down to the village now," he said.

"What! out in the gathering dampness, with that wound," returned Mabel, coming out of her dream; "indeed, sir, it will not be prudent."

"Nay, it will be better than remaining at home, growing fevered and impatient," he replied, gently; "I must go out; something seems to call me."

She made no farther remonstrance, but went about her duties quietly, with her thoughts turning back to the day's events. She was passing a back window, which she had thoughtlessly left with the curtain

undrawn, when she became aware of a face almost against the glass, peering in.

The sudden shock seemed to deprive her of her usual powers. She rushed hastily away, hurried to the door, and locked it, with swift, nervous hand. Not that she had recognised the man's countenance, but that the old terror of her persecutor's appearance came surging into her heart.

And then she extinguished the light and crept noiselessly to the front window, and sat down there, peering out with aching eyes for a glimpse of the unknown, or the first welcome appearance of Abiatha's familiar figure.

It was Abiatha who came to the door, and, finding it locked, knocked loudly.

"Who is there?" questioned she, her own voice sounding sharp and unnatural.

"It is thy friend, Abiatha Broad," was the grateful answer.

And she turned the key and gave him admittance. "What has happened?" demanded he, the moment he crossed the threshold.

"I cannot tell. Perhaps I have been too easily frightened, but I saw a face close to the window, watching me. I had only a glimpse, I should not be able to tell it again, but you know what terror is ever ready to start up before me."

"Thou hast seen him," said Abiatha, gravely, "then there is no need of my concealing anything. I have seen him myself to-night. No disguise can blind my eyes to his identity. Yes, thy foe is on the track, poor child."

Mabel uttered a low cry of terror, and caught his hand.

"You will not give me up, oh, sir, you will not give me up."

"Dear lamb, it is some one more powerful than I who must protect thee. I would we had answered Lady Constance's advertisement sooner. But it must be done promptly. I do not think there is any danger for to-night or to-morrow. That wary villain thinks we have no suspicion of his presence, and will only move cautiously. To-morrow thou must be safe at Ashton Villa, and Morley Ashton must shield thee with his powerful position. It is a strange world! Even the wicked bring about good deeds, and those who are called righteous and holy have, before now, been convicted of foul wrong. There are important interests which must not suffer, or I would stand myself before thee and defy him. The time is not yet, not yet, that I can stand before this man and denounce him as he deserves."

"Are you talking of him who calls himself my father?"

"Yes, my child, of him—and perhaps of some one else also. Let us bar down the inner shutters to-night, and bolt every door, and having done our best, let us trust in the watchful protection of a merciful providence."

He took her hand as she finished, and lighting the lamps, went a careful round of the whole house. After that he sent her to bed, but he himself paced the lower room to and fro along the windows, like a sentinel, until long after midnight.

(To be continued.)

SIR JOSEPH NAPIER, ex-Lord Justice of Appeal and twice Lord Chancellor of Ireland under Lord Derby's Government, has been nominated a member of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, in the place of the late Lord Kingsdown. The recommendation was made by Lord Cairns, and was confirmed by the present Lord Chancellor of England. It is the first instance of an Irish judge being appointed a member of the Judicial Committee.

THE GRIM FEMALE.—A grim female who cannot flirt nor giggle, nor cry and kiss and make up when scolded, is far away a worse kind of thing than a feather-headed little puss who is always doing wrong by reason of her foolish brain, but who manages somehow to pull herself right because of her loving heart. Weak women, vain women, affected women, and the whole class of silly women, whatever the speciality of silliness exhibited, are tiresome enough, heaven knows; but, unsatisfactory as they are, they are better than the grim female—that woman of no sex, born without softness or sympathy, and living without pity and without love.

WONDERFUL CAPACITY OF THE RHINELANDERS FOR WINE. The wonderful capacity for drink of the Rhinelanders is amusingly illustrated by Goethe, in his journals. "The Bishop of Mayence," he says, "once delivered a sermon against drunkenness, and after painting in the strongest colours the evils of over-indulgence, concluded as follows:—'But the abuse of wine does not exclude its use, for it is written that wine rejoices the heart of man. Probably there is no one in my congregation who cannot drink four bottles of wine without feeling any disturbance of his senses; but if any man at the seventh

or eighth bottle so forgets himself as to abuse and strike his wife and children, and treat his best friends as enemies, let him look into his conscience, and in future always stop at the sixth bottle. Yet, if after drinking eight, or even ten or twelve bottles, he can still take his Christian neighbour lovingly by the hand, and obey the orders of his spiritual and temporal superiors, let him thankfully drink his modest (sic) draught. He must be careful, however, as to taking any more, for it is seldom that Providence gives any one the special grace to drink sixteen bottles at a sitting, as it has enabled me, its unworthy servant, to do, without either neglecting my duties or losing my temper.'"

SCIENCE.

WHITE HORN BUTTONS may be made to imitate mother of pearl by being boiled in a saturated solution of sugar of lead, and then laid in a very dilute hydrochloric acid. Combs, to which the boiling process is not applicable, as it distorts the teeth, may be treated by being kept over night in a moderately concentrated cold solution of nitrate of lead, then laid for a quarter to half-an-hour in a bath containing 3 per cent. of nitric acid, and finally being rinsed in water. The use of sugar of lead is, however, prejudicial, and should be avoided.

THE IMPERIAL STANDARD YARD of Great Britain is determined from the pendulum which vibrates seconds, in a vacuum, at the level of the sea, in Greenwich or London. This pendulum is divided into 391,393 equal parts, and 360,000 of these parts are declared by Act of Parliament to be the standard yard, at the temperature of 62 deg.; consequently, since the yard is divided into 36 in., it follows that the length of a pendulum vibrating seconds under these circumstances is 39·1893 in. The English yard is said to have been originally determined by the length of the arm of Henry I. King of England.

ALCOHOL dissolves chloroform, so that when a mixture of alcohol and water is shaken up with chloroform, the alcohol and chloroform unite, leaving the water separate. On this fact Basile Rakowitch, of the Imperial Russian Navy, has founded his invention. The instrument he uses is a graduated glass tube, into which a measured quantity of chloroform is poured, and to this is added a given quantity of the liquid to be tested; these are well mixed together, and then left to subside; the chloroform takes up the alcohol and leaves the water, which, being lighter than the chloroform, will float on the top; and the quantity of water that has been mixed with the spirit will be at once seen.

GRAT consternation has been caused by the sudden irruption into the famous Wielecna salt-mines, near Cracow, of a vast body of water, which threatens to entirely destroy the mines. The water began to come in on the 19th of November, and, according to the latest accounts, the inflow was at the rate of 120 cubic feet a minute. These celebrated salt-mines, which have been for many years yielding an annual profit to the Austrian Government of about 600,000*fl.* per annum, employ 2,000 hands. The workings commence about 200 feet from the surface of the ground. The thickness of the salt is estimated at 700 feet, and the total length of the excavated passages in the mines exceeds 400 miles. The mines, which are the most productive of their kind in the world, were discovered in 1250, since which period they have been constantly worked.

THE SOLAR HEAT.—How to make the pot boil. —M. Mouchat, who has been experimenting on the utilisation of the solar heat, recently sent in a paper on this subject to the Academy of Sciences. He states that, according to his experiments, upwards of three-sixths of the solar heat might be gathered at a small cost. At Paris, a surface of one square metre normally exposed to the rays of the sun receives, on an average, at any time of the year, on a fine day, ten units of calorific power. Such a quantity of heat would make a litre of water at freezing-point boil in ten minutes, and is equivalent to the theoretical action of a one-horse power. He further states that he had proved the possibility of keeping hot-air machines going by means of solar rays, and had succeeded in making a few litres of water boil by exposure to the same agent; and in June, 1866, he had made a small steam-engine work by converting water into vapour with the assistance of a reflector one metre square.

STEAM TRAVELLING ON ICE.—It is said that a company has been formed at St. Petersburg for the introduction of steam for the traction of pleasure trains on ice. It is proposed to employ locomotives like those on the railways, of about 25 or 30-horse power, with this single difference—that the wheel tires are to be channelled in order to make them bite upon the ice without sensibly injuring it. The slip-

ping of the wheels being avoided by a snow-plough attached in front of the train, it is believed that it will be found practicable to make long journeys into Finland, Lapland, and some of the islands blocked up in winter by the ice. The plan is well supported, and it is thought that such means of communication may give life to countries which are now shut out from intercourse with other parts during the whole winter. The carriages, of course, are to be very comfortably heated, and the trains are to be provided not only with all the necessaries, but all the conveniences of life, including sleeping carriages, restaurants, and buffets; a carriage for games of various kinds, a reading saloon, and a concert room. The proposal is believed to be practicable, but should any insuperable obstacles present themselves in the way of land journeys, there seems no reason why trains should not run on the frozen surfaces of the Neva and other great rivers.

BLEACHING OF WOOD-PULP FOR PAPER.—M. Oriol, a French chemist, says that the chloride of lime, if the dose is the least in excess, has a tendency to give a yellow tinge to the pulp; that all energetic acids, without exception, tend to give a reddish colour to the paper when exposed for a long time to the effects of the sun or of moisture, and that the least trace of iron is sufficient, in a very short time, to blacken the pulp. He says he has succeeded in avoiding all these inconveniences by the use of the following mixture: For a hundred-weight of wood-pulp, he employs 400 grammes (four-fifths of a pound) of oxalic acid, which has the double advantage of bleaching the colouring matter already oxidised, and of neutralising the alkaline principles which favour such oxidation; he adds to the oxalic acid one pound, or a little more, of sulphate of alumina, entirely deprived of iron. The principal agent in this mode of bleaching is the oxalic acid, the power of which over vegetable colouring matters is well known; the alum has no bleaching power of its own, but it forms with the colouring matter of the wood an almost colourless lake, which has the effect of increasing the brilliancy of the pulp.

EFFECT OF INTENSE COLD UPON TIN.

THE phenomenon of rupture produced in the middle of blocks of pure tin by the action of intense cold has been brought before the Paris Academy of Science by M. Fritzsche. A box containing some pieces of tin, which had undergone a change in their atomic composition during the excessive cold of last winter, was produced before the Academy. Large blocks of tin had become crystallised throughout their entire mass, and had assumed a basaltic appearance. The most peculiar circumstance observed was the formation of large hollow spaces in the midst of the blocks, causing cavities which in some cases reached the extent of cubic centimetres. The sides of these cavities were perfectly smooth, with metallic reflections, while the rest of the tin, where broken up into small grains, or into pieces of various sizes, had a dull surface, caused, probably, by oxidation. This phenomenon had been previously noticed in practice, but, with the exception of a case mentioned by M. Erdman, in which the pipes of an organ were found to have been affected in a similar manner, nothing seems to have been published on the subject. "In England," said M. Fritzsche, "what is called in trade 'grain tin' is prepared by allowing large blocks of very pure tin to fall while hot from great heights. This tin, which sells 15 per cent. higher than ordinary pure tin, differs from that which has been modified by intense cold. The small sticks which it forms are much thicker, have a brilliant surface without any trace of oxidation, are neither fibrous nor friable; they have great cohesion, and may be bent without rupture."

AMONG the mineral substances much in request for agricultural purposes is sulphate of ammonia, of which it may be said that it would be more used if it were more abundant. The existence, therefore, of a natural supply cannot fail to be important; and Professor G. Ville, of the Jardin des Plantes, Paris, has given a fresh value to the services he has so long rendered to agricultural science by proving that sulphate of ammonia exists in considerable quantities in the lakes (*lagons*) of Tuscany. These lakes, with distinctive names, are in the province of Volterra, and for some years past have been laid under contribution by wholesale chemists for the boric acid contained in the waters. Professor Ville, operating on the spot, now finds that in the water of one of the lakes there is 48 per cent. of sulphate of ammonia; in another the quantity is less than 2 per cent.; and it is found also in the vapours which are constantly rising from crevices in the earth. Here, then, is an additional source of enterprise and wealth opened to Italy, which, if properly managed, will materially benefit the agriculture of Europe. It is impossible to foresee an end to the demand for boric acid and sulphate of ammonia.



[HOW FLORENCE SPENT HER BIRTHDAY.]

FAIRLEIGH; OR, THE BANKER'S SECRET.

CHAPTER VII.

"Once more shall my feet press the soil of my dear native land; now am I at home; and my own flag waves o'er my head! Welcome, dear shore of old England! Land best of all, I return to thee!"

The above words were uttered by Clarence Ormsby, as the Haides neared the shore. His face was flushed, and the expectation of seeing home and friends again, after so long an absence, caused his eyes to burn brighter, and lent an expression to his face which told of the deep feeling within.

"With all my heart do I echo your sentiments, friend Clarence," said Charles Rowe.

The two young men stood gazing at the pier, their hearts too full for utterance. Clarence was thinking of home, his parents, and how surprised they would be to see him. After writing the letter announcing his intended protracted stay, he had, at the earnest request of his friend, given it up, and prepared to return instantly.

Until the vessel touched the wharf the two friends remained silent. They saw their effects safely off, and then debarked.

Mrs. Dalvane and Walter were immediately behind them. The effect of their privations, and the deleterious air which they had been obliged to inhale, were perceptible on their features, which appeared careworn and sad. A smile passed over Walter's features, and he said, in a melancholy tone: "Here at last! My fondest hope is that our native land will bring us better fortune."

How different this from the light-hearted manner in which Clarence Ormsby welcomed his native shore! Alas, there was dissimilarity enough in their respective conditions to cause them to speak and act differently.

Mrs. Dalvane smiled faintly, and joined in his wish.

"Look, Clarence! That child will surely fall into the water."

His friend did not heed him, and Charles Rowe went towards the little waif, who was unconsciously in danger.

He had not advanced three steps before she lost her balance and disappeared over the side of the pier, into the tossing waters beneath.

An instant's thought, then Rowe sharply ejaculated, "Clarence!" placed his watch in his friend's hand, threw his coat and vest to the earth, leaped over into

the foaming tide, and grasped the child before Clarence had recovered from his astonishment.

No one had seen the child fall, but Clarence's exclamation, as his senses returned to him, brought a crowd to the spot, a rope was immediately lowered, and the terrified child and her noble preserver were hauled up together.

His action was applauded, but he turned away from the noise, and sought Clarence, leading the child by the hand.

"Well, you have christened your broadcloth. Bravely done, old fellow, name in the papers to-morrow," cried Clarence, gaily.

Rowe, bending a kindly glance upon the child, said:

"What is your name, little girl?"

"I haven't got any, sir!" she mildly answered, raising her large, luminous eyes timidly.

"Where do you live?" he again asked, thinking that he should certainly obtain an answer to this question.

"I don't know," was the reply.

Astonishment pervaded Rowe's features as he heard these words uttered in that strangely musical voice. He turned inquiringly towards Clarence.

"She is probably one of those little waifs who live in the street and beg," said Clarence, in reply to his friend's look.

"Oh, no, sir, I was never out of the house until to-day," said the child, in answer to the first clause of his remark.

Clarence had not intended that she should hear his words, but "little pitchers have long ears."

"The child is probably lost, at any rate. I will take her with me. I am going to the Western Hotel and you will ride as far as that with me, will you not?"

"Certainly I will. But what are you going to do with that girl? See how dirty she is, and barefooted. What will the people at the hotel think?"

"What they choose, I presume," rejoined Rowe, drily. "I cannot see such a lovely child as this suffer, for if you look at her you will see that she has magnificent eyes."

Charles followed with the child. As he was passing through, his coat caught upon a splinter, and he let go the child's hand a moment, and turned round to extricate himself.

At that moment the evil face of Luke appeared from behind a box. In an instant he placed his hand over her mouth, and catching hold of her, dragged her away with him, while Unmerciful trotted along behind, wagging his tail, as though he had done a noble deed.

"Where can the child have gone to?" exclaimed Rowe, a half-minute after. For a short time he looked around, thinking she had only gone a few steps, but he did not find her of course, and walked away with Clarence, much perplexed.

"I knew you would not keep that child long," remarked Clarence. "Someone probably snatched her away as you turned aside."

"It must have been done with remarkable expedition, for hardly a half-minute intervened."

"She seems to interest you to a great extent. If you are going to be so taken with ragged children, you can find employment for the remainder of your life."

"I could do nothing better if I had the means, to prepare a home for such, and circle around them good influences."

"A worthy idea; you would make an excellent philanthropist. But here is a cab, come!"

The driver of the vehicle looked rather curiously at Rowe, and thought of his cushions.

Clarence noted the cabman's gaze, understood the purport of his thoughts, and said:

"You need not fear."

The driver looked at the speaker, noticed his attire, and with that homage which men invariably pay to wealth, answered:

"Oh, very well, sir! No fear at all, sir!"

The two friends entered. The door closed with a slam, the driver mounted his box, snap went the whip, and they were driven rapidly away.

"You will come to the house at seven?" asked Clarence.

"Why can't you take tea with me at the hotel, and then we will both go together?"

"Well thought of. I will accede to your proposition," replied Clarence, and both fell into a meditative mood.

At that moment the cab stopped, the voice of the driver was heard, the door opened, and they alighted. Clarence, who had been watching Rowe, now observed:

"I should think, my somnambulist friend, that it was about time that you woke up."

Charles smiled.

"I have been rather meditative; but see, I am the cynosure of all eyes."

"And well you may be. But never mind," replied Clarence, irreverently.

"I have no objection," answered Rowe.

And the young men then proceeded to the room which had been assigned to them, and in which Rowe's trunks had been placed.

When they descended to tea, Charles's appearance

had undergone a complete change. The genteel, neat-fitting suit of broadcloth, the shiny bosom and snowy collar with its necktie of mazarine blue and the glistening cuffs, rendered him more acceptable than the wet, dripping, collarless, frowzy-haired individual who had ascended the stairs a few moments before.

Having taken tea in somewhat of a hurry, they entered a carriage and started for the mansion. In a short time, though it seemed very long to the expectant young man, the carriage stopped a few steps from the house, as Clarence had directed, for he wished his parents to receive no indication of his approach.

Clarence dashed up the steps and rang the bell, Rowe following at a respectful distance. In another moment the door was opened by a servant.

"My good fellow," exclaimed Clarence, grasping him by the hand, "keep quiet, for I wish to take them unawares."

As they reached the head of the stairs they paused. Florence was singing, and they waited the cessation of the music before they advanced.

Rowe was charmed; such music must be ethereal—it seemed too good and pure for earth; and the thought only caused him unhappiness, for it added another link to the chain which bound his heart, and was only the precursor of more and stronger ones.

They again paused at the door. Simon threw it open, and Clarence advanced cautiously into the room, while Rowe, with true delicacy, held back.

Mr. Ormsby and his wife were seated near the door, and Florence, chancing to turn her head, saw her brother first.

"Clary—dear Clary!" she cried, as she flew into his arms. "Oh, I am delighted to see you!" and she nestled her head upon his breast, while her long hair fell in confusion upon his chest and over his arm.

Charles Rowe gazed upon the scene without the power to move a muscle. He had expected to see a beauty; but she who was before him, with the blush of maidenhood mantling her cheek, the bright, liquid eyes of dazzling brilliancy, emitting sparks of love, the glorious tresses falling over her brother's form as well as her own, her fragile, yet exquisitely-moulded form in such a divine position of artless grace, it bewildered him; he had hoped to see a being of matchless loveliness, but she was—an angel.

At the sound of their daughter's voice, the parents had hastily arisen, and each clasped a hand while they gazed into his face with surprise and joy.

Rowe retreated a few steps; he did not wish thoughts of him to cross his friend's mind, for he wished to enjoy the tableau; and a charming one it was.

For some moments the scene continued, Clarence being assailed by the three in turn, two of whom hugged and kissed him to their satisfaction. Then an embrace from his father, followed by continued hand-shaking, interspersed with questions from his mother and sister.

The salutations having been finished, and Clarence free once more, he rushed into the hall, placed his arm within that of his friend, and entering the room, introduced him to each member of his family in succession. Charles needed all his self-possession when Florence's little hand rested within his own, and he bowed low, not daring to trust his voice. Then, seating himself, he listened with apparent attention, to the conversation which was now fully inaugurated.

Florence was seated at the side of Clarence, upon an ottoman, listening to some of his adventures. In the course of his narrative, he arrived at the point where the incident at the wharf was next in order.

Rowe endeavoured to catch his friend's eye, but Clarence resolutely kept his head turned away from him. Not wishing, from a feeling of modesty, to hear his name connected with the occurrence, and repeated before those to whom he was comparatively a stranger, he said:

"Pardon me for interrupting you, Clarence, but if you will mention no names the interest, I think, will be enhanced."

Florence looked up inquiringly, and her brother immediately replied:

"Credit to whom credit is due. I shall repeat it as it transpired."

During the repetition of his leap into the water, and the rescue of the child, Rowe moved uneasily in his chair. If there was anything that annoyed him, it was to hear his acts extolled in his presence, or to hear of his adventures from another's lips, whether accompanied with praise or not.

Mr. and Mrs. Ormsby passed glowing encomiums upon his daring; but what were they compared to the bright smile that had hovered over Florence's features?

To Rowe's great satisfaction music was proposed. It had been his desire to again hear that mellow voice, whose tones had so enthralled him upon the stairs.

Florence seated herself at the piano, and Clarence, taking his guitar from its accustomed place, ran his fingers lightly over the strings.

Mingling together in exquisite harmony, the bird-like tones of the fair girl's voice predominating, rang out the music, clear and sweet.

Again Rowe felt the power of that magic voice. He knew it was useless to rebel against it; he had met his fate!

The evening passed most pleasantly to all. Rowe was more reticent than usual, and indulged but little in conversation. At the time it was proper for him to withdraw he arose, and stated his intention of leaving them, when Mr. Ormsby remarked:

"Why, Mr. Rowe, we were under the impression that we were to have you for our guest. Is that pleasure denied us?"

"Yes, indeed," broke in Mrs. Ormsby, before he had time to reply. "You surely are not going to leave us. Clarence stated in his letter that you were to remain with us, and we have been eagerly looking forward to it."

"I thank you both for your kindness, though circumstances, which at the time I promised Clarence I had no knowledge of, have, of necessity, rendered my stay shorter. Consequently, I fear I must decline your invitation."

"Treason in camp, by Jove!" burst forth Clarence in his jovial way. "Now, young man, let us have no more of this nonsense! I'll see you on an action of contract within twenty-four hours. Indeed I think you must have taken leave of your senses. The idea of your returning to that musty hotel, when your home is here. Sit down, and remember I'm captain this time. Your trunk will be sent for in the morning."

"You have your orders, Mr. Rowe," said Florence, archly, "and if they are not expressed in an elegant manner, they are at least unmistakable."

"Kind friends, I thank you. Indeed after such invitations, I should be ungrateful, not to say rude to refuse, and I gladly accept."

"Come to your senses, have you?" laughed Clarence. "I thought you would." Then turning to his sister he said: "Come, Floss, tell me what is to be done a week from to-day, your birthday?"

"It's a secret, Clary," she smilingly replied.

"Oh, ho! a secret is it? Now let me guess. Grand parties you don't like. Oh, I can't think of anything; come and whisper."

"It's useless to ask her," interposed Mrs. Ormsby. "My husband and myself are also in the dark with regard to it."

"Some more of your caprice, is it? You are a regular little auto-rat," and he toyed a moment with the golden curls.

"You'll know soon enough," she replied, glancing significantly at Mr. Rowe. "I don't suppose it will meet with your lordship's approval."

CHAPTER VIII.

A WEEK passed away in one continual round of pleasure to the inmates of the Ormsby mansion, and more especially to our friend Rowe, whom the more he saw of Florence, the more was he attracted towards her. Yet remaining in her company, listening to her sweet voice, and hanging entranced upon her word, was a dangerous pastime, dangerous to himself and his quietude of mind. He knew this, was fully aware of the situation in which he was placed; yet how could he leave those kind friends who had treated him more as a son and a brother, than as an acquaintance, without giving the shadow of an excuse? To think of giving the real one was the height of absurdity.

Florence, in her childish way—for she was what could be termed a child-woman—a woman in mind, yet a child in those little attentions and innocent ways which so captivate the heart—had looked upon Rowe, from the first, as a friend; and during the short time that she had known him, had learned to appreciate his manliness, and regard him as a true friend. Accordingly the reserve which she would have shown to a person entering her father's house in any other manner, and with which she at first greeted him, began to wear away.

She, in her innocent way, asked his advice about little things, and appeared quite at ease in his presence; questioning him as to his favourite music; and when answered would perform it, if she had it, if not would send for it. In many other indescribable ways did she consult his tastes, and contribute to his happiness.

This was done with all the innocence and frankness imaginable, impelled by the motive to add to his contentment, and without the most remote idea

that all this sank deep into the heart of the recipient, and that he looked on them, as blind love always does, as emblems of her regard.

He, studiously trying to appear unconcerned in her presence, which to him was a difficult task, as in such matters he was a poor dissembler, caused a certain unnatural restraint to pervade his acts and conversation, which sat ill upon him, and with regard to which Clarence ventured a remark, but of course received no satisfactory reply.

It was Florence's birthday. Luncheon had just been partaken of, and Clarence and his friend were in the library. In a moment a slight tap was heard upon the door.

"Come in, sister!" shouted Clarence, for he knew it was she by the knock.

The door slowly opened and the fair face of Florence appeared. She hesitated a moment, and then said:

"Ah, you are enjoying your cigars; I'll not disturb you."

"What is it? What can I do?"

"Never mind, Clary; just as well in half-an-hour from now," she lightly replied, as she tripped away.

"What can the little witch want, I wonder," mused Clarence; "probably some new song to practice, or new book to pass my opinion upon," and with this hypothesis he consoled himself, and the half-hour passed gradually away. Then they repaired to the parlor where they found Florence alone, reading. She laid the book aside as they entered, and seating herself by her brother, looked doubtfully into his face, and said:

"Now I want you and Mr. Rowe to favour me—stop, don't speak until I get through. You will dissent to my proposition; Mr. Rowe, I think, will assent to it."

"Ah, you hear that, Charley; very complimentary. Well, Floss, what is it?"

Mr. Rowe did hear it, and also felt it.

"Shall I tell you?" continued Floss. "You won't be cross now, will you?"

"It must be something startling in the extreme, to require so much preface. I suppose this is the secret that you proposed to reveal to-day. Let us hear it, by all means."

"I will," she replied, watching him closely. "I want you to go to ——— with me."

"What!" he exclaimed, starting to his feet. "Are you dreaming that you ask such a ridiculous question?" Her brother was startled, and his face plainly showed it.

Rowe had not anticipated anything like this, and was rather surprised at the question, though he said nothing, but looked quizzically from one to the other.

Florence remained silent a moment, and then said: "Won't you really go, Clary? I don't want to go alone, and I must go."

"I go to that place of vice and infamy; that hot-bed of all that is low; that resort of crime and pestilence, and take my darling sister with me? Never! Florence, you must have taken leave of your senses to make such a request."

She gazed upon him for a moment with a pensive expression, amounting to sadness, and answered, in a low tone:

"There is one thing there that you have not named."

"What is it, pray?" he said, incredulously.

She bent her kind, blue eyes upon them, and answered:

"Honest poverty!"

Both the young men felt the warm blood suffuse their face. Clarence from shame, and Rowe from the thrilling effect of her words; yes, that one word, so small in itself, but conveying so much.

In a moment more, and in moderated tones, Clarence remarked:

"And what of it, dear Floss? What has that to do with you?"

"It has nothing to do with me," she replied, in the same calm tone. "If it had, Clarence, I should know how to pity those more who are oppressed with it, and better appreciate my own happy condition."

New respect, new love, new admiration, and new appreciation of her noble attributes, filled Charles Rowe's mind, and echoed in his heart, as he heard her good and true reply.

"You are right, Florence, you are always right my sister; but let me dissuade you from going. I will do anything you may want done in that quarter. I should hate to see you there."

"Clary, will you go? I must do what I want done myself."

"I think that our father and mother would object," he replied, evading the question.

"Mr. Rowe, will you go, to protect me?" said Florence, turning to that gentleman, who had been expecting the question.

"I will go anywhere to protect the sister of Clarence Ormsby," he returned.

"Thanks. The carriage will be at the door in a few moments, so you need have no fear of your respectability being outraged by being seen in that quarter."

"You wrong me, Miss Ormsby," he returned, the blood mantling to his face. "A top would abhor such a contingency, not I."

Clarence had been silent during the little dialogue between his sister and his friend, and now said:

"Really, Floss, you have changed since I went to Rome; that is the first word of scorn I ever heard you utter."

"I don't care, it's your fault," she sententially and spiritedly replied, the tears starting to her eyes.

Both the young men noticed it, and both looked at each other for an explanation which neither could give.

So loving, so kind as she was, yet forced to tears so easily, and angered at what seemed to be an unwillingness in the reply of Rowe. Truly, she was fearfully and wonderfully made. This gentle being, moved to the most tender of impulses by the slightest word, her heart brimming over with kindness and good feeling, and capable of the most idolising of love, yet provoked as quickly as she could be melted.

This anomaly I believe, is noticeable in the best of women; the kindest are the quickest to imagine themselves injured; the most loving are generally the most sensitive; and the very sensitiveness sometimes leads them to misconstrue, not willfully, but accidentally, a remark or act which hurts the sensitive nature, and too proud to vent their grief in tears, they allow anger to usurp its place. Again, it is noticeable, that the anger of an over-sensitive woman is momentary, and not at all vindictive or inclining to invective, being merely a passionate outburst of grief, which is soon over, and then contrition follows, as earnest and intense as their momentary passion.

Again, jealousy is an ingredient, and more fully developed in the most loving hearts than any other. I do not refer to ranting, teasing spitefulness, which is sometimes, and wrongfully, classed under the head of jealousy; but to a jealous anxiety or solicitude, which can hardly be called jealousy, but which partakes so much of its nature that no other word will express it. A woman of the nature which I have humbly attempted to describe, as a general thing is endowed with a goodly quantity of that kind of jealousy referred to above; it is part and parcel of her love; it is a nameless anxiety which springs into existence with the first throb of divine feeling that actuates her heart; it attains in strength and volume, as the object of her affection becomes nearer and dearer. This jealousy is not hunting after inconstancy for a subject, for confidence is the offspring of true love, and the fruit of confidence, sensitiveness, and true love in this jealousy, which may be aroused by a glance, a word spoken in a tone which strikes upon the ear of the sensitive hearer as being harsh, or a word spoken in another's favour, which can possibly be construed as derogatory to the listener. It is an intangible, an almost mythical influence, yet its power is great. It does not descend to accusation or watching; it has no need of it, for it is most generally felt when two loved ones are among others. No explanation of the feeling can be given, but its effects are to sadden, and the relief that the sufferer finds in solitude and tears; and in three-fourths of the cases, the neglect, oversight, or unkindness which give rise to this feeling are purely imaginary, and proceed from all the combined effect of idolatrous love and over-sensitiveness. Sensitiveness receives the first shock, the heart is touched, and pride restrains tears, thus jealousy steps in, and renders sensitiveness more sensitive, and jealousy more jealous; while the unhappy owner of these perplexing qualities is wavering between a pre-conceived imaginary certainty, doubts, and harassing fears, and the relief is tears.

Such I conceive to be some of the qualities which are combined in a true, loving, devoted, unselfish woman. To describe them differently, and strike out the above-mentioned weakness, would be to falsify, and diverge from human nature. We all have our faults and failings, which sometimes disguise our good qualities; but in the above illustration, the faults are few, and only make the virtues shine with threefold brilliancy; and here let me state that I have noticed these feelings between mother and son, sister and brother.

But if I were to enlarge upon the subject, which both space and the continuance of my story forbid, I should, perhaps, weary the reader, and perplex myself; for the most inexplicable, inconsistent, contradictory, yet the best, the noblest, and the most to be desired, is a true woman. Reader, you will call the remark an anomaly; I agree, and point to my subject, which also is an anomaly, and if I have thrown any light upon it, I am satisfied; and here let me beg pardon for the digression.

Possessed of the above qualities was Florence Ormsby.

"Since you are determined to go, I will accompany you," said Clarence, with a faint exhibition of reluctance.

"That's right, Clary dear, I knew you would; but you did provoke me," and she smiled at the two young men, as much as to say, "I didn't mean anything."

In a short time the three were in the carriage, and moving rapidly towards the desired locality. By degrees, as they proceeded, the houses became less respectable, and the aspect of the streets more uninviting. Florence sighed as she noticed the dreary and forbidding looks of the houses, and wondered why it was that human beings could live so like beasts.

"Ah, sister, you are already weary of your journey," remarked Clarence, who had been regarding her, and conjecturing as to what was passing in her mind.

"No; only I am sick at heart when I behold such utter wretchedness; and, instead of improving, it grows worse."

"As it will, the farther you proceed," he responded.

The carriage stopped somewhat suddenly, when Florence said:

"Come, gentlemen, we have arrived at our destination."

"And a fine place it is for my sister to be in," grumbled Clarence. "I have a good mind not to move an inch."

Mr. Rowe alighted and helped her from the carriage, while her brother followed, a moment after, with very ill grace.

Knocking at the door a stout, ragged-looking Irish woman answered, who, when she saw what her visitors were, made an attempt at a curtsy, and was very nearly dropping the child which she held upon her arm. The infant, not at all pleased with this mode of treatment, set up a genuine baby-squall; the Irish woman excused the child, and asked them who "they'd be after a wantin' to say?"

"Miss Prescott," replied Florence, gazing at the woman with an unmistakable look of disgust.

"Shure an' ye'll find it up two pair o' stairs, at the fresh dore on thay lift."

The prospect was growing more repulsive, the air was nauseous, the place filthy, the people more so. Florence wavered. Her brother noticed it, and again put forth his opinions.

"I will carry it out, now that I have entered upon it," was her mental resolve, and she immediately commenced the ascent of the stairs.

While the three are threading their way up the dirty staircase, I will take occasion to call the attention of the reader to the circumstances under which Florence became acquainted with Miss Prescott.

While seated in her carriage, a few days before Clarence's return from the continent, she had seen a young and slender girl issue from a large house near by. As Florence gazed upon her, she thought that her face wore a remarkably sad expression. As she approached the carriage the tears burst from her eyes.

The heart of Florence—that kindest of hearts—was touched; she leaned out, bade her stop, and inquired the cause of her grief, and learned that a lady, whom the poor girl had done some needlework for, and who was worth nearly a million of money, had declined to pay her the sum of six and sixpence; that she said "all it was worth was four shillings." Florence, in the gentlest way possible, and without wishing to hurt her feelings by any show of charity, placed in her hand at parting a piece of paper tightly rolled up, with the injunction not to open it until she arrived home, which the young girl, with no idea of its contents, assented to. What was her surprise upon opening it to find a bright, shining sovereign! How thankful she was; this would relieve her wants, and allow her to rest a little from the labour which was slowly wearing her young life away. She told her mother of the incident, and she advised her daughter to return it; "that they had better die than be beggars, and that looked too much like it." Years before these people had been prosperous and happy, and though now in poverty, former pride still held a place in their breasts. By chance, the merest chance, the young girl and Florence again met, and she attempted to return the money. Florence was indignant, playfully indignant, and would not hear a word of it, but made her accept two more, as a penance for thinking of returning it. A sweet penalty it was, and with a lightened heart she went to her dismal home, thinking of the cheer which it would give to her mother's sinking spirit, and the many delicacies she could get before her with this money, which, like manna, seemed to fall from heaven.

(To be continued.)

AN ARCHITECTURAL GUY FAWKES.—Lord Campbell said a few days ago:—"Next to Guy Fawkes, the late Sir Charles Barry had been the most sinister and inexorable enemy of Parliament. He consigned the two Houses to structures where, as they could not hear what was going on, they had but one alternative—to vanish. The House of Commons, by a false roof, had defeated the manoeuvre. The House of Lords had died away under its influence."

DISASTERS ON THE AMERICAN LAKES.—During 1868 these have amounted to 341 more than any previous year. 255 vessels have been ashore as follows:—On Lake Michigan, 107; Lake Huron, 50; Lake Erie, 65; Lake Ontario, 27; and Lake Superior, 6. 69 total losses have taken place, viz.: Lake Erie, 24; Lake Huron, 18; Lake Michigan, 34; Lake Ontario, 11; and Lake Superior, 2. The disasters which have occurred in the Detroit river far surpass those of any former years, and have been credited to either Lake Huron or Lake Michigan, or to whichever locality happened to be in closest proximity.

ADELCEIA.

BY THE

Author of "The Beauty of Paris," "Wild Redburn," &c.

CHAPTER I.

In the reign of Queen Elizabeth, the country-seat of Richard Stepmore, a wealthy, retired merchant of London, was situated upon the banks of the Thames, many miles above the great capital.

The mansion was large and elegant, and all its surroundings displayed profusely the immense wealth and cultivated taste of their aged owner; who, at the moment we introduce him to the reader, was reclining upon a richly-cushioned couch at the entrance of a handsome summer-house in his garden, much liked by him as a pleasant and quiet retreat.

His face was turned towards the setting sun, as if he were absorbed in admiring the many-coloured and golden-hued clouds which overshadowed it. It was a pale and haggard face, as of one who had suffered for years the pangs of some deep-seated and incurable malady.

His tall and slender frame was shrunken and withered, so that his garments hung loosely about him. Furrows and wrinkles crossed and re-crossed his features, all of which were deeply stamped with the sharply-defined impress of ever-present physical pain. But his eyes, bright, clear, and blue, were brilliant with the fires of a resolute soul, ever defiant of the torture which preyed unceasingly upon his body.

Time and disease had withered his frame until there did not appear to be in his thin and pallid fingers, and in his emaciated limbs, the strength of a child; but neither time nor disease had dimmed the keenness nor quenched the brightness of those clear orbs, to which one might readily imagine all the physical power ever possessed by the man had retreated.

When his eyes were closed he appeared so lifeless, so worn, so corpse-like, that, but for his short and laboured breathing, one who might gaze upon him would exclaim:

"This man is dead!"

And then, having observed that painful breathing, the spectator would add:

"No, not dead yet; but dying!"

But as the pallid, waxen lids were raised, and the light and power of those eyes revealed, the same spectator would be forced to think, as he started back in surprise:

"There is the strength of twenty ordinary men in this man's soul—a strength which defies death itself."

Upon those features, so withered and worn, could be read an expression which told of a firm and energetic desire to be just and charitable to all; but this expression came forth most glowingly, when the afflicted merchant was in the act of making others happy by relieving their needs.

The balmy air of June, cooled by the evening breeze, as it swept across the rippled surface of the river, played with his long and snow-white, silken hair, and was most grateful to a brow heated with a consuming, inward fever. He had been reading, but the book had fallen from his hand, which hung down at his side, as if the feeble fingers had been overpowered by the weight even of that small volume.

Upon a quaintly carved table, and within his reach, lay a staff and a crutch; and also, as if in mockery of the feebleness which demanded their aid, a long and heavy sword, with dents here and there upon the broad and unpolished scabbard of steel, which told that the blade it encased had seen no little service and that very recently.

It was plain that the sword did not belong to the merchant, nor did the heavy golden spurs which bore it right knightly company. No spur was suited to the slippers of fur he wore, nor could his delicate frame hold that heavy weapon, whose very shape and size spoke of headlong charge and deadly blows amid squadrons of powerful men.

The invalid at length turned his eyes from the glories of the setting sun, and their glance fell upon the sword and spurs. He stretched out his long, thin arm, and placed his attenuated fingers feebly upon the hilt, as if he desired to lift and unsheathe the weapon. But his attempt only dislodged the sword from the table, and it fell clattering upon the pebbles of the garden walk, where it lay stern and silent.

The invalid laughed aloud and somewhat bitterly, saying:

"One would imagine it had brains, and recoiled contemptuously from the touch of such a man as Richard Stepmore; and yet the purse of Richard Stepmore, frail silk though it be, hath a pith that is more potent than your nerves of steel, Sir Sword."

His glance fell upon the spurs, and his eyes sparkled as he took them in his hand, thinking, as he gazed upon them:

"They are gold; but not therefore more valuable in my eyes. They are the symbol of knightly honour and renown, won upon the field of battle by my son, in England's defence. Well, he is now Sir Bertram Stepmore, and I, his father, but plain Richard Stepmore, late tradesman and merchant, of the class those who are called 'lords' and 'sirs' look down upon. I trust that, though the boy has so soon won a title from the Queen, he will never learn to despise the calling of his father."

A somewhat bitter smile curled his thin lips as he added, aloud:

"Yet the time was, when I thought to be born of the nobility was a decree from heaven, that he so born should despise those who make England's greatness—her merchants, her mechanics and her yeomen. I have lived to learn that no mere title can ennoble. Noble deeds, not noble birth, make the true gentleman."

The sound of approaching footsteps attracted his attention; and, still retaining the spurs in his hand, he turned his face towards the point from whence the sound proceeded.

A tall and powerfully-framed young man and a fair and graceful maiden were advancing slowly along one of the walks of the garden, hand-in-hand.

The eyes of the maiden were bent upon the ground as they walked; and her cheeks and brow were deeply flushed, as she listened to her companion, whose head was also downward inclined, as he strove to win a glance from the lady.

The maiden was charmingly beautiful in form, in feature, and in grace, while her companion seemed, in shape, air, and countenance, no unsuitable mate for her. She was richly clothed, and no doubt her remarkable beauty was enhanced by the glittering adjuncts of wealth, jewels, and robes of costly silk and velvet; yet had she appeared in the homely garb of a farmer's daughter, Adelia Louvaine could not have less attracted admiration for her loveliness.

Sometimes she raised her eyes, though but for an instant, to those of her companion; for the ardent passion and devotion he took more pains to display than to conceal, so moved her, that her glance seemed to fly from his, lest he should read in her gaze much that she saw in his.

He was clad in the garb of the court gallants of that day, though he wore also the ash, plume, and insignia of an officer of the body guards of Queen Elizabeth. His face was frank and noble in its expression, though dark and swarthy from long and recent exposure to sun, wind, and weather. It was very evident that he was no indoor warrior or carpet-knight, but one who had, like his battered sword-scarred near by, seen hard and recent service in the field of war.

His garb, indeed, was new and freshly put on, but upon his cheek there was a scar of a wound scarcely healed, while upon his broad, bold, and handsome brow, two thin, but distinct lines, told that Sir Bertram Stepmore had more than once received dangerous wounds in winning his spurs.

"Speak, Adelia," he said, as, indeed, he had said a score of times and received no reply from his trembling companion. "We can no longer leave my father alone, since we have actually strolled into his presence. Will you consent to be my wife?"

"Ah, Bertram," she replied, "you know very well that I love you, and would esteem it an honour and a blessing to be your wife; but that I can never be, without the consent of your father, who, perhaps, has higher views than to wed his only son to a penniless orphan girl. See; he is gazing towards us—he may be angry with me."

"And why angry with you, Adelia? Do you not think that he knows we are lovers?"

"I do not know, Bertram, for he has never said a word to me upon the subject."

"No, nor to me; and that appears very strange," said Sir Bertram, moodily. "Perhaps he supposes we are attached to each other simply as a brother and sister might be. But as well now as hereafter, so I will lay the truth before him at once."

"Ah, then let me withdraw, Bertram," she said, quickly, while her face flushed deeply.

"No, Adelia. Let us be as we are now when I speak—hand-in-hand, for since he has seen us thus we must not permit him to suppose that we are ashamed of our intimacy. But you have not said yes or no to my question, Adelia?"

"It is not for me to say either, Bertram. Master Richard Stepmore is your father and my benefactor," she replied, in a very low tone, for they were now within a few paces of the invalid.

"So," said the merchant, in the deep hollow voice peculiar to him, a voice as expressive of his years of pain as were his pale and worn features, "your haste to cast off your war-worn garments, Bertram, was not so much to wear that gaudy garb, as to make love speeches to Adelia? So, after all, you love her more than you do your father."

Sir Bertram bit his lip, being somewhat confused by the suddenness and energy of this charge, for, whether simulated or not, there was anger in his father's tone and eye.

"Indeed, Master Stepmore, he loves you more than tongue can tell," said Adelia.

"Master Stepmore!" echoed the merchant. "Since when have you thought it fitting to cease calling me father? For full fifteen years you have called me father, and now, forsooth, I am to be called 'Master Stepmore' by you."

"A good and kind father you have ever been to me," replied Adelia, as she knelt by the side of the invalid, and pressed her lips upon his thin white hand, while tears sprang in her beautiful eyes.

"Yet you love this young man a thousand times more than you do me; nay, you are eager to win from me even the love he may bear for me. Listen, Adelia. As I was lying here an hour ago, I saw a boat glide from the opposite bank, and moved rapidly towards the garden-landing. He that urged it through the water, pulled no laggard stroke; but with a will, as if his life depended upon his haste. As the boat drew near I recognised my son as its occupant, and my heart beat stronger than it hath for many a day."

"It was then that I yearned for strength to fly to meet my boy, as he returned from the wars, full of honour and knighted for his heroism."

"Ah," thought I, "he makes all haste to embrace his afflicted and beloved father! His heart is impatient for his father's blessing!"

"And so it was, my dear father," interrupted the young knight, also kneeling.

"Wait, Bertram," continued the merchant. "Yes, Adelia, I warmed my soul with the belief that my son made all that headlong haste to greet me, his loving father. It is true that he passed here for a moment after he had landed, and did warmly embrace me, but it was because I lay in his way, between him and a maiden's white scarf, fluttering from a fair hand thrust from a window in the maiden's room!"

The merchant pointed to one of the upper rooms of his mansion, and fixed his eyes upon those of the kneeling girl.

Blushes covered her beautiful face and brow, and her eyes sank down from his.

"It was the maiden his heart was bursting to greet, and not the father. He saw me as he bounded along—I pray heaven he was not displeased because sight of his aged father delayed him—but I think there was much less speed in his steps as he turned aside to say:

"Thank heaven, my father, you still live!"

"We conversed but a moment, and then he spoke of his travel-stained and ragged dress, and how he had ridden hard and fast from early dawn that he might greet me ere the sun went down; and so he left his sword and golden spurs upon the table, saying he should be gone but ten minutes or so to change his war dress for a more pleasant and peaceful garb, and then return to me forthwith. I see he hath decked himself in courtly style, in the garments your hands have been so busy upon of late—"

"Father," interrupted Sir Bertram, firmly, and yet with the profound respect with which he ever spoke to him, "I have supposed that you knew well that I love Adelia fondly—"

"As brother should love sister; yes, Bertram."

"Far more fondly than ever brother loved sister," replied Sir Bertram, impetuously; "nor do I love my father any less because I so fondly love her. I have asked her to become my wife."

"Of course she said 'aye,' right willingly," remarked the invalid with real or assumed peevishness.

"She would not be so blind to her advantage, as to refuse to be the wife of the rich old merchant's only son and heir, the wife of Sir Bertram Stepmore, and that old man ready to die at any instant and leave her 'my Lady Stepmore,' mistress of great wealth. No, indeed, she was all too wise to say you nay."

There was both irony and bitterness in his tones, so keen that the kneeling maiden grew very pale and red by turns.

She was about to reply, when Sir Bertram arose, and passing his arm around her slender waist, as one who had or was resolved to have a right to do so, raised her to her feet.

"My father," he said, proudly, "you are speaking as I have never heard you speak before, for you are speaking to inflict pain. Adelia would not consent to be my wife."

"Ah, she refused you?" exclaimed the invalid, with genuine surprise. "Yet she has either loved you secretly for years or been playing the hypocrite."

There was plainly a deep shade of disappointment upon the brow of Richard Stepmore as he uttered these words, and Bertram and Adelia exchanged glances of wonder. But a moment before, the invalid appeared angry on being told that his son had asked Adelia to marry him, and now, on hearing that she had refused him, he was unmistakably chagrined, if not angry.

"Ah," thought Richard Stepmore, "the whims of a woman are as traceless as the wind, and like the wind often have strength enough to overthrow works and plans which have cost man years of care and toil."

"Adelia is no hypocrite, father," said the young knight. "She loves me, but she loves you, her benefactor, also, and will not, without your consent, be my wife. It is true that she is an orphan, and has no fortune, yet she is dearer to me than if she were the Queen of England."

"Come," said the merchant, with a smile, "it is well that Queen Elizabeth does not hear you say so; for old and faded as she is, she cannot bear even a looking-glass in her palace, lest it should tell her she is yellow and ugly. But what if I were to say to you, 'My dear children it has been the main hope and desire of my life to live to see you man and wife,' what then?"

In reply to this unexpected question, the surprised lovers again knelt at the side of the invalid, and each grasped one of his hands.

"I must throw off my mask," continued the merchant, for I have worn it already either too long or just long enough. Besides, I like not such pangs as I felt but now, when you told me, Bertram, that Adelia had refused to be your wife; I feared that after all, woman's wit had deceived me, and that she had secretly given her love to some other gay gallant of the court. My dear son, I know no maiden in all England whom I would rather see your wife than Adelia—may heaven bless her for her care and kindness. No daughter could be more loving and patient than she has been. I have never allowed either of you to imagine that I desired you should be lovers, and then husband and wife."

"And why not, father?"

"Because you are notably inclined to choose for yourself in all matters, and because she is—well, a woman, and women never like to be dictated to in affairs of the heart. You would have hated each other for spite."

"Then you consent to our union, father?" exclaimed Sir Bertram.

"You have not yet, I believe, obtained the consent of Adelia," replied the merchant, whose usually pale face was now all aglow with delight.

"Dear father, if I may now indeed so consider you," said the blushing girl, "I love no one as I love Bertram, and I know I never can love another as I love him, but what dower have I to bring him except my love—"

"He asks no dower except that love," interrupted Sir Bertram, with his usual impetuosity, and warmly embracing her.

"Let me speak, dear Bertram," urged Adelia, gently freeing herself from her lover's arms. "I must speak of Sir Otto Dare."

"Of Sir Otto Dare!" exclaimed the invalid, frowning and sitting erect. "Give me my staff, Bertram. I cannot so much as hear that villain's name without desiring to smite him in the face."

Sir Bertram placed the staff in his father's hands, wondering much at his display of extraordinary indignation.

"Who is this Sir Otto Dare?" asked his son, "and why do you brand him as a villain, and so violently?"

"Who is he?" burst from the thin, pale lips of the merchant, while his eyes glowed like coals. "He is a villain!"

He raised his staff as he spoke and pointed across

the river, which at that place was scarcely more than a quarter of a mile in width.

Sir Bertram and Adelcia looked and saw, rising over the hill which rose boldly upon the opposite bank, a small party of horsemen, one of whom bore a banner, upon which the last beams of the sun fell broadly.

The banner was of bright pure white, except in the centre, on which was painted or embroidered a large red and golden globe.

"It is the banner of Sir Otto Dare," said Adelcia, while her grasp grew tight and tremulous upon the arm of her lover. "Great heaven, I trust he does not purpose to visit Stepmore Retreat."

"Who is Sir Otto Dare, that you and my father are so moved by the sight of his banner?" asked Sir Bertram, wonderingly.

As he spoke he saw that the lovely face of Adelcia was ghastly pale, and that her gaze upon the glittering banner was full of fear, and even of horror.

She seemed unable to reply to his question, and Sir Bertram looked towards his father for an answer. But the thin, pale lips of the invalid were hard, compressed and motionless, while his eyes were fierce, flashing, and fixed also upon the banner and the party of horsemen accompanying it.

CHAPTER II.

THE air of his companions so plainly expressed distrust and apprehension, that Sir Bertram threw aside the light court raptur he had put on as best suited to his brilliant dress, and buckled on the heavy and far more serviceable weapon his father's feeble hands had failed to lift.

"It is strange," he said, "that the mere sight of a silken rag should so excite you both; but it is stranger still that neither of you appear to deem me worthy of being informed."

"The man to whom that banner belongs," interrupted Master Stepmore, "has presumed to ask of me my consent that he should wed Adelcia."

"That many should do the same, my father, is not strange," said Sir Bertram, with a glance of pride and admiration upon the beautiful girl. "But I trust he has not persecuted you or her in urging his suit. Now I remember that I have heard of the knight as a fierce and daring warrior in the service of the Emperor of Germany."

His face grew dark as he spoke, for he remembered that the name of Sir Otto Dare had been associated with evil and disgraceful deeds of sacking vanquished cities in the fearful wars upon the continent of Europe, and at last he indignantly asked:

"Why is the presence of Sir Otto Dare tolerated in England?"

"Because he is in England as an ambassador from the court of the Sultan, Mahomet III., in whose service the adventurer now is," replied Master Stepmore. "There his banner streams boldly forth now, and you may see the silver crescent of the Moslem emblazoned upon his golden globe. He has feigned to be a good Catholic, a zealous Protestant, and now, 'tis said, he has become a faithful follower of the False Prophet of Mecca."

"And he has dared ask you, my father, for the hand of Adelcia!" exclaimed Sir Bertram, his brow very dark and his hand tightly grasping his heavy sword hilt. "How long is it since his insolence presumed so far?"

"Was it insolence in a knight of noble descent, my son, to ask a simple merchant for the hand of his adopted daughter?" replied Master Stepmore, bitterly. "What if crime and blood has stained his name, is he not a noble in whose veins flows the blood of dukes and earls? What if he be a renegade, an apostate, an adventurer, a merciless mercenary of the infidel, was it not great condescension in Sir Otto Dare to stoop to ask a common tradesman for the hand of his adopted daughter, a maiden who knows not even the name of her parents, and who may, for all you, I, or anyone else knows, be the child of the basest?"

Master Stepmore's clear blue eyes glowed like live coals as he spoke, and Sir Bertram felt the form of the graceful girl shrink and tremble at his side.

"She is herself!" exclaimed the young knight, as he threw his arm around her more closely. "She is herself, and being no more, is a fit mate for any lord or prince in Europe. When did this adventurer return to England, and when did he first see Adelcia?"

"Winds that must have sprung from the breath of Satan landed him at Dover some three months after you went forth with the Earl of Essex to Ireland, and that is fully a year ago; so that Sir Otto hath been in England, if he hath remained in this country ever since he landed at Dover, nine months. He saw Adelcia some eight months ago, when he made it his pleasure to visit me here, upon pretence of negotiating a loan. He came not then as Sir Otto Dare, but under another name. Yet I knew he

was Sir Otto Dare, for my ill-fortune made me acquainted with him many years ago, my son. For reasons of my own, I did not permit him to know that I recognised him, fearing thereby to teach him to recognise me as one whom he had known and injured, when I bore not the name I bear now. You seem surprised, my children, but the time is not far off when I must speak to you of my early life, and of important secrets which concern both of you.

"I do not think that Sir Otto recognised me as one whom he had known years ago, or as one whom he had injured basely. I refused to make him a loan; I believed the letters of credit he displayed were forgeries, knowing the man as I did. Though, had the richest merchants of London stood security for him, I would rather have given all my wealth to the veriest beggar of the street than lend a farthing to Otto Dare."

"He seemed so little abashed by my refusal that I suspected he had visited Stepmore Retreat for some deeper purpose than simply to borrow money. He feigned to be ill and asked that he might tarry here for a day; I consented, not desiring to appear suspicious of him, and being anxious to detect the true purpose of his visit."

"He had come alone, in the disguise of a French merchant, and feigned to be unable to speak any other language. He remained here, unwatched and unsuspected, as he supposed, two days, during which time he frequently saw Adelcia, as she moved about the house or walked with me in this garden."

"I became convinced that he had no remembrance of me, no suspicion that he and I had ever met before; and I also became convinced that his purpose in visiting my house was not to borrow money—though no doubt he would gladly have put my gold into his pockets."

The merchant paused for an instant, as if to recover breath, for he had been speaking with a nervous rapidity very unusual with him. But as Sir Bertram was about to speak, he continued, with the same nervous rapidity:

"He came to this place to see Adelcia—"

"Ah!" said Sir Bertram, as his dark hazel eyes flashed, and his handsome face grew suddenly hard and stern. "To see Adelcia!"

"Yes. That fact gleamed in his evil glances as they sought each feature of her face; and, indeed, I had no doubt of the fact when I learned from my gatekeeper that when this pretended French merchant first halted at the entrance of the avenue he asked if Master Richard Stepmore had not an adopted daughter, by name Adelcia Louvaine; and that he had followed this question with many others, as to her age, the colour of her eyes and hair, and how it came about that Master Richard Stepmore had adopted her, and when and where. My gatekeeper, as you know, is an old soldier, who well understands French, so that the pretended merchant had no need to make known the fact that he could speak English."

"It was well for this Sir Otto that I was not at home," remarked Sir Bertram, somewhat fiercely. "And since he has injured you, though it may have been years ago, and perhaps before I was born, he shall account for it."

Master Stepmore made no remark upon this fiery speech, except to say, curtly:

"Make no threats, my son. Frightened foxes are hard to trap, and tigers aroused are dangerous foes. Well, at the end of two days he departed, bidding me farewell as if there were no earthly chance that he and I were ever again to meet. And truly I did so pray; for the very sight of the man made my blood curdle in my veins. He departed; yet I knew that he and I were to meet again, nor was I surprised when, within three weeks after his first visit, he came again in another guise, for it was as Sir Otto Dare, with sundry of his followers, in state, as it were, and in a style lordly yet urbane, as if he wished that Master Richard Stepmore should not be overwhelmed by his knightly splendour and condescension, and told me that he desired a private interview with me. I granted it, of course. Could I refuse so great a man an interview, forsooth?"

"Pardon, my father," said Sir Bertram; "but is not this adventurer far past middle-age. Some of those atrocities in which 'Otto of the Red Plume'—as I have heard him styled—was chief actor, bear date when I was but a boy."

"Yes; he is more than fifty years of age, gray and swarthy in hair and feature, nor had he ever a comely face in his youth, when I knew him well. Age and the lawless life he hath led have not improved his looks. But you will doubtless soon see him, if he be with yonder party. You perceive that the banner remains upon the brow of the hill, with but few near it, while several are riding in various directions in search of a ford."

"They will find no ford unless old Walters, the cottager, points it out," said Sir Bertram. "But tell

me what passed during the interview of which you were speaking."

"I was about to do so, Bertram. Fearful that he might learn either that I had recognised him as the pretended French merchant, or as one whom I have great cause to hate, I treated him with the respect due to his rank—I am but Master Richard Stepmore, you know, and he is a knight, and the ambassador of a great monarch," remarked the merchant, with keen irony.

"You do not recognise in Sir Otto, the Turkish Ambassador, your late guest, the pretended French wine merchant," he said, when we were alone.

"I gazed at him steadily, and feigned great surprise; and then forced myself to ask his pardon for having refused him the loan he asked. But with urbane loftiness, he said:

"It is Sir Otto who should ask forgiveness of the worthy Master Stepmore, for having entered and tarried in his house in a disguise ill-suited to the character of a noble knight. But what will not a man do for love, Master Stepmore?"

"For love! The old insolent!" cried Sir Bertram.

"Take care, my son," said the merchant, in that ironical tone he had seen fit to employ so much in speaking of the nobility. "You are speaking of one who justly claims to be descended from no less a person than Richard of Gloucester, who, for a time, sat upon the throne of England. No doubt Sir Otto inherits all the royal virtues which were so brilliant in his noble ancestor, the king who strewed his path towards the crown with the bodies of his murdered kinsmen. You are a knight, I know—that is, you have won the title of 'Sir,' which makes simple Bertram sound more courtly than it used to do, but you are the son of a tradesman, and not 'born in the purple.' We 'of puddle-blood,' as the nobles call us, must take off our hats and bow our heads when we speak of men who were born of the nobility."

The eyes of the merchant rested keenly upon the face of his ambitious son, as he thus mockingly made light of the hereditary claims of the nobles for the cringing, crouching, do basing respect of the common people.

Sir Bertram, who had already, by his native valour and merit, gained one of the titles of that nobility, and who esteemed it highly, bit his lip and blushed, but made no reply, for the soft palm of the maiden he loved pressed his hand, as if to tell him that she at least was proud that he had the right to be called Sir Bertram, a captain in the queen's body-guard.

"My father's tongue is unusually bitter to-day," thought the young knight. "The sight of Sir Otto's banner has filled his mouth with gall."

The merchant resumed his story of the interview, saying:

"I was not amazed by the words of Sir Otto, for I had suspected something of the kind. Yet I assumed a voice of wonder, and exclaimed:

"And did love have ought to do with your honour's disguise, Sir Otto?"

"In truth, naught else, Master Stepmore. I am a plain, blunt man, Master Stepmore, and well-to-do in the world, as you may know, since I am as you see; and though there be royal blood in my veins, and as I am, rich, and not very distant heir unto an earldom—the present possessor as he soon may be deceased, since he is in feeble health, as he hath been these score and more of years—nevertheless, I am above many of the prejudices of my rank, and, although indeed it is a condescension, I think it no shame to wed the daughter of an honest man, though he has neither rank nor noble blood; that is provided the maiden be fair and above all reproach, as I know your daughter to be, worthy Master Stepmore."

"She is not my daughter, Sir Otto," I replied. "I suppose you mean that maiden, and as I spoke I pointed through the window into the garden, where it chanced that Adelcia was plucking evergreens."

"Sir Otto gazed at her as if inflamed with devoted love, and it was plain that he was eager to speak with her."

"He subdued his impatience, however, and said:

"Yes, I mean Mistress Adelcia—but is she not your daughter, worthy Master Stepmore?"

"My adopted daughter, Sir Otto, and we call her Adelcia Louvaine. Am I to understand that you are here, Sir Otto, to ask the hand of that lady in honourable wedlock?"

"You are amazed, are you not, Master Stepmore?" said he. "But such is my business here. I had heard much report of her beauty, Master Stepmore, and desired to see for myself—to see her when she least expected to be admired, for our dames and damsels of these days, be they ever so homely, yellow and faded, can so hide defects and put on falsities that one not on his guard must assuredly be deceived. Therefore, as I had resolved to wed and forsake an unsettled life, I visited Stepmore Retreat in disguise,

and became fascinated, charmed, I may say bewitched."

"I made no reply, and Sir Otto continued:

"It grieves me, Master Stepmore, to learn that the maiden is not of your own flesh and blood, since all do say Richard Stepmore is a most upright and honourable man,"—and then he went on inventing fulsome praise of me and mine, and concluded by saying:

"But though she is not your daughter, Master Stepmore, she hath been reared by you, and I, valuing all thought of wedding beneath my rank, herewith ask her of you in marriage."

"No doubt he imagined that I would nearly burst with joy in being thus honoured, and to deceive him I did force myself to utter soft and grateful thanks for his condescension, though my hand itched to smite him in the face. But he did not perceive my hate and disgust, for as I spoke I kept my eyes upon the ground."

"Have you yet spoken to the maiden upon this matter, Sir Otto?" I asked.

"No, nor upon any other subject, Master Stepmore."

"Then what if I should consent, Sir Otto, and she refuse?"

"That would be a small affair to a man of my resolution, Master Stepmore. I trust that you have reared the maiden to know that your will must be obeyed, but should it be otherwise and she reject me, of course we—but leave all that to me, Master Stepmore. Your consent is all I desire from you. I suppose the maiden is now heart-free, and hath no lovers in her train—I mean no accepted lover?"

"Add what if she hath, Sir Otto?"

"His face grew very black when I asked this question, and he struck the table near him heavily with his fist, as he replied:

"That man, whoever he may be, high or low, would find me his enemy if he dared urge his suit after I had asked her hand. Leave that matter to me, Master Stepmore. Go broach the matter to her at once. Use all your influence in my behalf, and you shall find me a most powerful and valuable friend. You have a son, I hear, Master Stepmore?"

"I have a son, Sir Otto."

"Aye, and one of ambitious and warlike mind, who aspires to be more than a tradesman and a city merchant, Master Stepmore? I can befriend him. I will take him into my train and put him in the way to make himself a name, fame, and fortune. 'Tis said the young man is brave and even courtly, far beyond his station. I have wealth and influence, Master Stepmore, and will push his fortunes rapidly."

"The insolent!" exclaimed Sir Bertram, unable to restrain his indignation. "Thank heaven! I have never asked the aid of any man, except my father."

"Ner that of late, my son!" said the merchant, with a glance of pride upon the noble and warlike figure of the young knight.

"Well, what reply did you make to this insolent adventurer, father?"

"I asked him to pardon me for seeing fit to decline his offer, as I had other views in my mind. He became enraged, though he saw fit to restrain his wrath, and said, sharply:

"I will see the maiden, Master Stepmore, and then speak with you again."

"So saying he hurried from the room in which we were, and soon after accosted Adelia. She shrank from his presence as soon as he had told her his name, for she had heard of his deeds in France and Germany."

"Indeed I did," said Adelia, quickly. "He came up to me bowing and simpering, with the foppish expression used by the court gallants—whom I have seen and heard you imitate mockingly, Bertram, a thousand times. No doubt he thought me to be a foolish rustic girl, easily to be dazzled by his glittering garb, his fangs, his cuffs, his sparkling jewels, plumes and golden chains, and certainly by his flattering speeches."

"I was amazed, but not terrified, for I saw my father's face at the window. I replied guardedly to his honied words, and was about to ask him to permit me to retire, when he said:

"Fair lady, be not alarmed because a nobleman admires your dazzling beauty. I have something of importance to say to you, as I have been deeply smitten with your many charms."

"Sir," said I, quickly, for his boldness affrighted me, "I do not know who you are, nor have you any right to thus address me."

"Oh," he said, loftily, "I am a very poor wooer, and yet no common one. We shall become better acquainted hereafter. We have met before."

"Met before?" I exclaimed—for I had not recognised him as the pretended French merchant who had visited Stepmore Retreat a few days before.

"Then he told me how the fame of my beauty had led him to assume a disguise which disgraced his noble

rank, to view my face and manners covertly; and how he had returned in his own true character and rank to ask my hand of my father."

"I trembled, as I heard him speak, for there was something fearfully repulsive in his face and in his eyes, although he feigned to be a humble lover. Still, I thought it would be very discourteous to leave him precipitately, and I did not know that he had not been permitted by my father thus to address me."

"My embarrassment emboldened him to take my hand and raise it towards his lips, I liked not such freedom, and snatched it away."

"Be not so shy, maiden," he said. "I am a most honourable gentleman. I am Sir Otto Dars, the sultan's ambassador."

"No wonder did he mention his name, then I fled from him, as from a serpent in coil, and took refuge in my own apartment. Oh, I assure you, I barred, looked, and boiled my blood, and dragged a great chest against it, trembling violently the while. Sir Otto Dars! I had been speaking with that terrible man! He had held my hand in his! He had made love speeches to me! He was then in the same house with me, and there to ask my father to give me to him for life! Sir Otto, whose strokes deeds I had heard mentioned by bearded men, who shuddered as they told what the monster had done! Great heaven, was this gray and grizzled desperado a suitor for my hand with the consent of my benefactor!"

"The thought overpowered me, and sinking upon my knees I prayed with sobs and tears, that heaven would shield me from the evil fate of being the wife—oh, horror!—the wife of Sir Otto Dars!"

(To be continued.)

MICHEL-DEVER.

CHAPTER LXXXII.

THORNE left the train at a small town. The carriage he ordered was ready to take him on to his destination. He began to have many doubts as to arriving in time to prevent the intended elopement; for the horses furnished him seemed incapable of travelling more than five miles an hour.

He could only console himself with the hope that the lovers would have no opportunity of leaving before ten o'clock, and if no accident happened he might yet be in time to intercept their flight. He was anxious to do so; yet throughout the day he had thought less of May and her intended escape than of his own happiness. Insensibly all bitter and hard feeling merged in the tide of sweet hopes that filled his heart when the image of Claire arose before his fancy, and he felt more kindly even towards his offending daughter for the softening influence she had brought into his sad life.

Darkness gathered around him. The storm of the past day rendered the road heavy, and the tired horses struggled along, stumbling at nearly every step. At length the lights came in sight, and on looking at his watch, the impatient traveller found that it was not yet ten. This was the night fixed on for the elopement, and he might yet be in time, as he had but another mile to travel. He spoke to the driver:

"If you can make the distance between here and Thornhill in ten minutes, I will give you a crown extra."

"The horses are dead beat; they couldn't do it if you offered me fifty crowns. If you're in a hurry you'd better get out and see if a horse can't be had here."

"So I will—for I believe you are right as to the condition of your horses. Here is your money, with enough added to it to pay your bill here, since you cannot go on to Thornhill."

He sprang out when he drew up in front of the hotel, and looked eagerly round him. A cabriolet, in charge of a small boy, was standing near the private entrance, which he at once recognised as that of Dr. Brandon. Without a moment's hesitation Thorne sprang into it and said to the lad:

"Run in and tell the doctor I have taken his carriage away for half-an-hour. You know me, Ben—Mr. Thorne. Say to him that I will send it back immediately."

With staring eyes, the boy remonstrated: "But yer can't do it, Mr. Thorne, for the gentleman is goin' to use it. T'warr't the doctor brought it here, but Mr. Sinker; he jest went in a minute, and I was to hold the horse for him."

"Ah, indeed! so much the better. Give my compliments to the young man when he comes out, and say to him that he will have no use for a carriage to-night."

He gave a sharp stroke to the horse and dashed off just as Sinclair reached the door. As the doctor's cab standing at the gate of Thornhill would attract

little notice, it had been arranged that it should be used to bring May in town, and at Dr. Brandon's house the lovers were to take possession of the carriage provided for their intended journey.

The message delivered by the frightened Ben assured Sinclair that for the present all hope of success in their enterprise was over, and he hurried to Dr. Brandon to inform him of what had occurred.

Thorne dashed on towards his long deserted home, almost in good humour at the sudden checkmate he had given the plotters. May was safe for the present, at all events, and he had time before him in which to bring her back to her allegiance to himself.

When he reached the gate opening into the grounds of Thornhill it was quickly unclosed by a woman who had been on the watch. The night was too cloudy to enable him to distinguish her person under the shadow of the hedge, but Thorne recognised the voice of Nancy Bean as she said:

"It's all right, Mr. Sinker—the dragon's asleep! as if she'll find it hard to wake up agin; an' here's Miss May's carpet bag. You jest go on arter her, an' I'll take care of the carriage."

"You are very accommodating, upon my word, Nancy," replied a voice that seemed to freeze her into stone. "Give me the bag, and do you drive Dr. Brandon's cab back to town and tell him I returned it to him with my thanks for its use. As to yourself, I think it will be best for you not to show your face at Thornhill again."

He was very calm, for he could afford to be so in the moment of victory. Nancy handed him the bag mechanically, and Thorne strode up the avenue without another word.

He was scarcely beyond hearing when a mocking voice close at Nancy's elbow said:

"Somebody's served out now, I vow. I told you I'd be even wi' ye, an' be jabers I've kep' me word, Miss Bane."

Nancy made a dive at his shaggy looks, caught him by the arm, and holding him down, in spite of his struggles to escape, gave him a sound whipping, the horse, like the well-trained hack he was, standing by in grave contemplation of the proceeding.

When she had punished him to her own satisfaction, Nancy grimly mounted into the carriage, and as she drove off, said:

"If that don't teach you not to meddle with what don't concern you, I'll get Mr. Sinker and Dr. Brandon to give you as much more."

"Owl! owl! Miss Bane, we're square up—you needn't get nobody as security for your debt, fur you've tuck it out'n my poor bones."

Barney moved off, suppressing the howls that arose to his lips through the dread he had of the master of the place, and hastened to report Thorne's arrival to the housekeeper.

In the meantime that gentleman made his way to the window, through which he correctly supposed May would attempt to make her escape, and entered the room in the manner described in a previous chapter.

Casting a rapid glance around, he lifted May from the floor, and carried her into her chamber, in which a light was burning; he placed her on the bed and sprinkled water on her pale face. He saw how much it had changed, and a faint feeling of remorse came to his heart for all he had made her suffer in those long months of loneliness, followed by the advent of a tyrannical task-mistress, who had neither feeling nor consideration for her helpless charge.

But his long repressed anger surged up again when May unclosed her eyes and regarded him with a stare of frightened bewilderment. With a sardonic curl of his lip, he brusquely said:

"You are a pretty daughter, to swoon at my feet when I come upon you after so long an absence. What have you been doing to make you so much afraid of me? for I see that you are trembling with apprehension."

"Oh, papa," she faintly gasped, "do not speak to me so! do not reproach me, for after all, I have lately gone through, I cannot bear it."

"Ah, indeed! I thought your late experiences had been all *couleur de rose*. In spite of my efforts to shield you from such a fate, you have clandestinely made the acquaintance of a fortune-seeker, and if I had not arrived as opportunely as I did, by this time you would have been disgraced by eloping from your father's house with a man you scarcely knew."

May looked up at him with a face of stony whiteness, and slowly said:

"The life I lead beneath this roof is unendurable to me; is it wonderful, then, that I should have sought to escape from it at any risk? though you greatly wrong Harry Sinclair by imputing to him such motives. He is honourable and disinterested, as time will prove. I would have gone with him to-night—I do not deny it; for with him I should at least have found the love and appreciation that died for me in this house when my mother passed from it."

Oh, papa! have you no pity for me—no feeling of compassion for your motherless child?"

Thorne angrily replied:

"Pity! compassion for an ingrate who has defied my wishes as you have! Love! appreciation! stuff! sentimental nonsense! You are your mother's own child, thwarting me at every turn and opposing your will to mine. On one condition you may go your own way, and I will do nothing to prevent it. Surrender to me the money left you by your mother, and then see if this paragon of a lover will accept you. I may soon have pressing need of a large sum, and you may purchase your freedom by giving it to me. You can sell out your bank-stock, as it is left absolutely to you to do as you please with, reserving for yourself three thousand pounds, as I do not wish you to be utterly impoverished."

For a few moments this avenue of escape seemed like a glimpse of heaven to the unhappy girl, but the new-sprung hope died in its birth, for she remembered the promise her dying mother had exacted from her, and she faintly replied:

"I would gladly do as you wish, sir, but I dare not break the pledge I gave to my mother. She may have been wrong in asking it of me, but she thought she was acting for the best."

"No doubt—for her best actions were always opposed to my interests."

He sat down beside the bed, and May did not venture to reply to him in his excited state. After another pause of considerable length, he went on:

"I have decided to make a change here which will be for your benefit as well as for my own happiness. You may think it very soon for me to think of marrying again, but knowing what you do, you cannot be very much surprised. I come hither to put a step to what has been going on, and I take you with me that you may make the acquaintance of the lady who will soon become my wife. You will find your Cousin Ada ready to take charge of you. She has recently married Mr. Balfour, to whom she was engaged twenty-five years ago. To your grandfather they owed their long separation, for he married her life as he did mine."

"It was Mr. Balfour's daughters that my cousin Ada took under her care," said May, timidly. "I am glad to hear that she has become their step-mother, for she is a good woman. I—I am not as much surprised at what you tell me about yourself as you might suppose. Dr. Brandon prepared me for the news some time ago. I hope you will be happier, papa, than you were with poor mamma."

"If I am not it will be my own fault, for Madame L'Epine is an angel of beauty, and sweetness. I love her and I will endeavour to render her happy. We shall leave this place to-morrow morning at six o'clock, so you may pack up your things and be ready at that hour. My betrothed will soon win your affection and confidence, and if you choose, you can place yourself on a better footing with me than you have ever held. I will inquire about this young Sinclair, and if he is a proper match for you, I will not withhold my consent to your marriage, provided you will promise to aid me, if I should need your help."

"Dear papa, you know I will do all that is possible," was the grateful reply, and May arose from her reclining position and stood before him, with a faint hue of returning colour fluttering on her cheeks.

He interpreted her wistful glance, and bending down, impressed upon her brow the first caress she ever remembered receiving from him.

CHAPTER LXXXIII.

"TELL me how you have fared with Mrs. Black, and how is it that she sleeps on the sofa in your sitting-room at this hour of the night?"

May blushed, but she spoke the truth:

"I do not like Mrs. Black, and I am afraid I have been a great torment to her; but she treated me badly from the first. She drinks wine for her supper, and that she took last night was drugged, to enable me to elude her vigilance."

The father laughed aloud:

"So the sheep-dog was muzzled, or rather fuddled with strong drink—a pretty story that to promulge about a woman whose living is dependent on her perfect respectability. That gives me good cause for discharging her, and I shall do so in a very summary manner. I will write a few lines, and enclose in them her quarter's salary. Good-night! Get ready to leave Thornhill, and then try to sleep, for you have a long journey before you."

Thorne left the room, and after a contemptuous glance at the sleeping governess, he unlocked the door of the parlour and went out, taking with him the lamp that had been left upon the table. He stalked forward till he came to the apartment occupied by Mrs. Benson; pausing, he struck an im-

perious knock upon the door, which was replied to by the voice of the housekeeper:

"Come in, sir. I am in a state of debility, but you will excuse that under the circumstances."

Thorne paused in the doorway, and curtly said:

"You did very right, Mrs. Benson, to warn me of what was going on, and I thank you very sincerely. I only stopped to ask how your rheumatism is, and to see if any one was with you who can transmit my orders to the coachman. This boy can go at once to Sam, and tell him to have the carriage at the door by six o'clock in the morning. I am going to take my daughter away with me and keep her under my own eye."

"That'll be best, sir, for I can't do nothing, and that Miss Black ain't worth a pin. Of course, sir, yer'll take her with yer?"

"I am sorry that it will be impossible for me to do so. I shall discharge her, as I have no farther use for her services, and pay her something extra for so unceremoniously ridding myself of her. I shall leave Thornhill with May before Mrs. Black is awake in the morning, and you must explain to her all that is necessary. With your command of language, you will not find that a difficult matter."

The housekeeper bridled, and self-complacently replied:

"Thank yer for sayin' that, Mr. Thorne. I can hold my own ag'in most people in the talkin' line, an' I hain't no objection to breakin' a spear w' Mrs. Black. She's a orfe creature, but I think I know how to dispose my words in an expressible way as she kin."

"No doubt of it, Mrs. Benson; but I hope you will be as respectful as possible to a lady who has stood in the position of teacher to Miss Thorne. I wish Mrs. Black to be treated with every consideration as long as she stays here."

"Very well, sir; if she don't give me more o' her sass, I'll be as polite as a dancin'-master; but if she goes to fling her big words at me, I'll talk back and give her as good as she can. Them's Barney, sir, ready to do whatever you tells him, an' he's faithful to me, I insure you."

"I suppose he wrote the letter you sent me?"

"Yes, sir; an' a miserable lookin' thing it was; but my hand was in such a state of debility that I couldn't do nothin' myself, so Barney writ what I told him. He's a good enough boy, but he's always worritin' me 'bout the piece of gold I promised him for watchin' Miss May."

Understanding the hint, Thorne produced his purse, and taking from it a sovereign, offered it to Barney, saying:

"Since the debt was incurred on my account, allow me to pay it, Mrs. Benson. The letter was worth much more than this to me. Now, boy, be off with you."

Barney grasped the money and vanished.

As Thorne drew near the door of the housekeeper's room, he said:

"Good-night and good-bye, Mrs. Benson! I shall not see you in the morning before I leave. I suppose I shall find everything in order in my own apartment."

"I hope so, sir, but I can't say, for I can't attend to nothin' in my present state of discomposure. I can only hope that Mrs. Black ain't bin a rummagin' and turnin' things roun' there too, as she has in all the rest o' the house."

"If you have kept the duplicate key yourself as you were bidden to do, she could not intrude into my sanctum. If she has been in there, I will turn both of you away instantly," he said, in his sternest tone.

"Oh my, sir! you give me such a turn speakin' in that frustratin' way. I can just begin to creep roun' myself, but I went in and 'tended to things to-day, an' you'll find the rooms all ready for you, for I 'spected you wouldn't be long a comin' arter you got that letter."

The door was closed, and Thorne moved towards his own apartments. By this time it was past midnight; but weary as he began to feel, he drew paper towards him, and wrote a polite note of dismissal to Mrs. Black, in which he inclosed something more than her quarter's salary. He added a postscript in which he said:

"Excuse me for not waitin' till you awoke, but as the ailments of a lady who has drank a quantity of wine may last an indefinite time, I thought it best to remove my daughter before they ended. Last night I prevented an elopement, but if you will be prudent about mentioning that, I will be equally reticent as to the helpless condition in which I found you when I came to Thornhill."

W. T.

"That insinuation will bridle her tongue," he muttered, "and she need not know that the wine had been drugged."

Ten minutes later he was sleeping soundly himself, oblivious of all that was passing on the other side of the house.

When Nancy reached Dr. Brandon's she found Sinclair there, and soon told her story. The young lover was very anxious on May's account, and insisted on driving back to Thornhill, accompanied by the girl, who could be sent forward to reconnoitre, while he lingered near the house till she returned to him with her report.

The two went out at the gate, and Sinclair stood beneath the shadow of a tree within sight of the open window through which Thorne had entered, while Nancy crept towards those of her young lady's room. A few moments later the lamp was taken from the table, and the figure of a man passed from the apartment, which Sinclair had no difficulty in identifying as that of the master of the house.

He waited a few moments, and finding that Thorne did not return, he ventured to draw near the window and call softly on the name of May. She came swiftly from the inner room, and in a moment was beside him.

In an apprehensive tone, she said:

"Oh, Harry, you must not remain here, nor can I go with you to-night. My father has been far less angry than I believed possible; and after what has passed between us, I feel bound in honour not to leave my home, even with you."

"My dear May, if Mr. Thorne will be reasonable—if he holds out the slightest hope that he will consent to our marriage, I will not ask you to elope with me, for you know we reluctantly chose that as our only resource. What has he said and to what have you pledged yourself?"

"He has promised to inquire about you, and if he finds you a suitable person for me to marry, he declares that he will no longer object, if I will sacrifice a portion of my fortune to extricate him from some difficulties he apprehends. I cannot tell yet what I shall do, but I have promised him that I will not defy him so far as to give you my hand without his knowledge."

"He is welcome to make any inquiry he pleases, and so far as I am concerned all will be found right. As to your money, May, do with it as you please—purchase his consent to our union with it, if that be what he wants. If life and health are granted me, I can more than replace it in a few years. When your mother gave you such stringent commands concerning your fortune, she feared that you might have nothing else to rely on in the future; but now you have my love—my energy to sustain you, and you need fear nothing for the life that lies before you. It shall be my care to render the path you walk on smooth and happy."

"I know it, Harry, and I am ready to make any sacrifice that is possible to enable me to place my hand in yours and commence the pilgrimage of love and duty that lies before us. Let us have faith in each other, and all will end well for us. Papa seems changed from what he was—he is softened by the new attachment he has formed, and he came hither to take me with him; that I may meet my future step-mother. My cousin, Mrs. Balfour, is there, and she will take charge of me. Dr. Brandon will tell you that with Ada Digby I shall be quite safe and as happy as it is possible for me to be when separated from you. He knows what a noble and true woman she is."

Sinclair sighed slightly, but he cheerfully said:

"It is better to wait, and see what patience can accomplish, than to rush into a union which might for ever estrange your father from you. There are very few who are justified in making a runaway match; until to-night I thought ours an exceptional case, but in this new phase of affairs we should violate our own sense of right if we attempted to carry out our design. I came hither, because I dreaded the violence of your father towards you, but I am so grateful for the promise Mr. Thorne has made you, that I am willing to give you up to him a little while."

"Oh, Harry, if you and papa had met to-night, I tremble to think what the consequences might have been."

"It was best, perhaps, that we did not; but you need have feared no violence on my part, May—your father would have been sacred to me under any circumstances. Imagine my feelings, if you can, when I came out from the hotel, where I had been making the final arrangements about the carriage that was to take us, and heard the message left by Mr. Thorne for me. I must see him before he goes away, and refer him to those who know me, and will vouch for the truth of all I have heretofore stated to him."

"An interview will be impossible before we leave, for I am to be ready at six o'clock, and papa seldom rises before that time. He is never in a good humour in the morning, and you had better follow us, then you can meet him on neutral ground. Give me time to make a friend of Cousin Ada, for I rely on her to help us to secure papa's consent to give me to you."



[THE STOLEN FAREWELL.]

Sinclair reflected a moment, and then said:

"You are a wise little counsellor, May, and I will take your advice. I will give your father time to get over his natural irritation at the effort I made to take you from him, and then seek him. You will see me within a week, and soon afterwards I hope that all will be settled to our satisfaction."

"I am sure it will, and now I must bid you good night. I have a great deal to do before I sleep, if, indeed, I can sleep at all after the excitement I have passed through."

"Good-night, and good-bye, dearest love; not long shall the light of your sweet presence be wanting in the home which is waiting for its mistress. If your father cannot be reasonably propitiated, I will claim my treasure in defiance of him, and find means to secure it too."

May's head rested a moment on his breast, and their lips met. She then withdrew herself from his arms, and retreated from the window. The next moment Nancy Bean bounded through it and said:

"Here I am, Miss May, come to help you put up your things. I rode out with Mr. Sinclair, but I just told him that I wasn't goin' back to-night. The dragon's asleep, and in the mornin' I can keep out of Mr. Thorne's way."

"I am very glad that you are here, Nancy; you can assist me materially, and after I am gone you can return to L——, and make your preparations to take charge of my future home till I come to reign over it myself."

"Will your pa ever let you do that, Miss May?"

"I hope so. Let us pack my clothes now; I feel worn out with all I have gone through during the last few hours, and I shall gladly rest, even if I cannot sleep."

"You lay out the things you want to take, and I will put them in the trunk myself. You can lie on the sofa and look at me while I do it. It's the last thing I can do for you, Miss May, and I'll do it all right."

May gladly accepted the offer, for she was trembling with nervousness. Nancy worked and talked with equal energy, while her young lady reclined on the sofa and watched her, with dreamy eyes and pre-occupied thoughts.

At the end of an hour all was ready, and the two retired. Nancy took possession of the sofa, but before doing so she closed the blinds of the window in the next room, and placed the lamp on the table near the sleeping governess. When she went back to May, who by this time was in bed, she laughed gleefully, and said:

"My! won't there be a row when the dragon wakes and finds you gone! I just wish I dared to stay, and see the fight out between her and old roomatiz."

May laughed, too; but she said:

"I hope Mrs. Benson will stand on her 'dignitude,' and Mrs. Black will scarcely forget what is due to herself so far as to quarrel with the housekeeper. Be quiet, Nancy, for I must try and compose myself to sleep."

It was very long, however, before sleep closed her eyelids, but at length from sheer weariness she slept.

May was aroused by the voice of Nancy, who was looking down on her.

"It is a quarter past five, Miss May, and although you was sleeping like a top, I thought I'd better wake you in time to get ready for breakfast. I'll help you to dress quick, and if your pa comes, I'll just pop down behind the bed."

May sprang up, and commenced her hurried toilette. When it was nearly completed, she asked:

"Have you seen Mrs. Black this morning, Nancy? I am dreadfully afraid that she will wake up before we get away."

"You needn't have no dread 'bout her, Miss May. She's heavy enough for two or three hours yet. I looked in at her the first thing when I got up; I don't think as she'll beapt to drink wine again for her supper after this."

At that moment a rap came at the door, and Nancy darted to her place of concealment; but it was only Mrs. Gandy, who had been sent to summon Miss Thorne to breakfast.

May went out immediately, and found that the carriage was waiting to take her trunk. She stepped back, and made a warning gesture to Nancy, who crouched down behind the bed till the man left the room with his burden. Closing the door, May then went to join her father at the table.

Mr. Thorne was looking less jaded than on the previous night, but he was silent, and irritable; he hurried his daughter through the repast, swallowing his own coffee almost at a scalding temperature, and devouring whatever was set before him. But he laughed grimly as he rose from the table, and said:

"I am anxious to be off before the forsaken governess can find the use of her tongue. I believe I had rather take a shower-bath under Niagara, than have the phials of her wrath poured upon me. Get your bonnet, May, and lay this envelope on the table where Mrs. Black will see it as soon as she regains sense enough to notice anything."

May took the letter, hurried to her room, and after

bidding Nancy good-bye, returned to her father before his patience was exhausted. He allowed her a moment to bid adieu to Mrs. Benson, and then they were whirled away at the utmost speed of the horses.

Nancy effected her escape through the window, and returned to L—— to deliver the messages to Dr. Brandon and Sinclair, of which she was the bearer.

It was late in the day before Mrs. Black awoke. She looked around, slightly bewildered, and wondered why she was sleeping on the sofa with a shawl thrown over her. She raised herself, and called on May to come to her. When no response was returned she was alarmed, and started up to go in search of her pupil.

A chair was drawn up close beside the sofa, on which a letter was placed; peering down at the address she saw that it was for herself, and with a furious clutch at it, she cried:

"She is gone with her lover, and this is to tell me that my reputation as the guardian of youth is forever blasted."

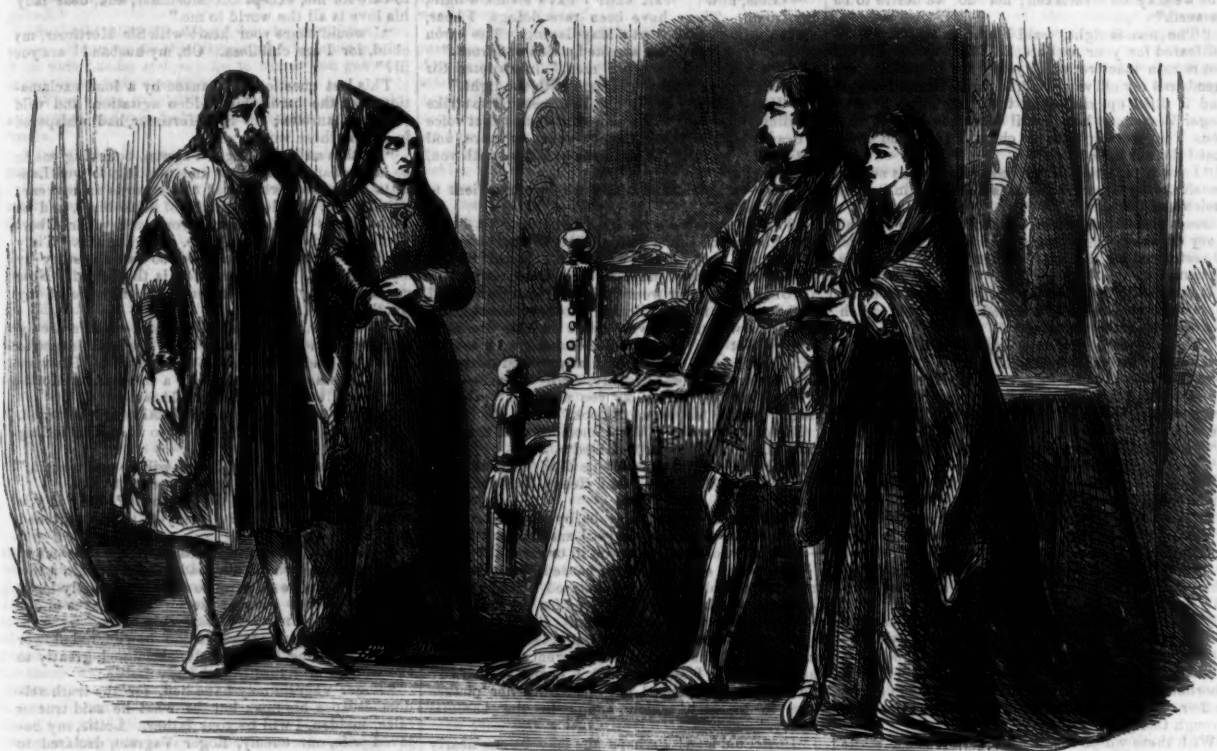
Although Mrs. Black could not see distant objects without her glasses, she had very perfect vision when anything was brought almost in contact with her eyes. She opened Mr. Thorne's note, and read it in silent horror. That she, above all women, should be accused of neglecting the charge confided to her, and from such a cause, was more than she could calmly bear. She wept, almost tore her hair, and bewailed the loss of the comfortable home she thought she had secured; but she gradually regained her composure, and prepared to depart with as much dignity as was possible under the humiliating circumstances.

She rang and ordered her breakfast to be sent in to her. When it came, a message was delivered from the housekeeper to the effect that a carriage should be sent from L—— whenever she wished to leave Thornhill, as such had been the orders of the master.

To this Mrs. Black replied, in injured tones: "I cannot too soon get away from a house in which I have been so infamously treated. Let the vehicle be brought as soon as possible, and I will shake the dust of this place from my feet. I only wish that I had never entered it."

Barney was despatched to town for the carriage, and without venturing on an encounter with so disrespectful an antagonist as she knew Mrs. Benson would be, the discomfited teacher packed her clothing and took her departure, whither no one knew, nor cared.

(To be continued.)



[A MOMENTOUS INTERVIEW.]

THE FLOWER GIRL.

CHAPTER XXVII.

SIR SIMON VAGRAM had not ceased to pour soft speeches into the unwilling ears of Lauretta, as they left the presence of the earl, and proceeded towards that quarter of the palace once occupied by the deceased countess.

As soon as it became prudent Sir Mortimer whispered his secret to Andrew Tarl. He had closely studied the features of the old soldier during the interview we have described, and detected the pity with which he watched Lauretta, and the hate with which he regarded him, under the belief that he was Sir Barton.

"I may trust this man," thought Sir Mortimer, "and it is plain that Lauretta looks upon him as a friend."

He laid his hand upon the shoulder of Andrew and whispered:

"Do not start nor cry out. I am not Sir Barton Woolfort, but he whom you swore to serve on Shingly Green. I am Sir Mortimer Clare."

Andrew Tarl was too old and experienced a soldier to show the slightest surprise. Moreover, he was one of those slow and phlegmatic natures which never are startled by anything. Besides, he was extremely cautious, and did not believe the statement of the disguised knight, until it dawned upon his mind that there were but two persons who knew that he had sworn to serve Sir Mortimer—that is, himself and the knight.

Accepting the declaration of Sir Mortimer as truth, therefore, though his brain whirled in wonder thereat, he replied, after a pause:

"Then my life is pledged to serve you, sir, and you may rely upon Andrew Tarl."

"Be ready then to effect our escape from the palace," said the knight. "Where were it best to strike down Sir Simon?"

"In the countess's apartments, if it must be done, sir. They are remote from the inhabited quarters of the palace."

"Very well. Leave his punishment to me," whispered Sir Mortimer, who then fell back and again grasped the arm of Lauretta.

Poor girl! She could only compare herself to a tender dove in the claws of two ravenous kites, and therefore trembling walked on in silence.

The opportunity for which Sir Mortimer yearned at length occurred, for it was purposely made by Andrew Tarl, as they arrived at the door leading

from the hall into the bed-chamber of the late countess.

"You have the key, Sir Simon," said the soldier, who desired to give Sir Mortimer a chance to warn Lauretta.

"Take it, and unlock the door," replied Sir Simon, who desired to retain his grasp upon the arm of the maiden.

Andrew Tarl was not to be baffled in his little plot to allow the lover to whisper to his betrothed. He fumbled tediously and vainly with the lock and key, until Sir Simon, becoming impatient, released his grasp upon Lauretta, saying:

"Stupid dolt, will you never open the door," and then proceeded to do so himself.

"Do not scream," whispered Sir Mortimer in the ear of the maiden, as the unsuspecting knight turned his back. "I am your Mortimer in disguise. Be calm and firm, Lauretta."

Calm and firm she was, though the knowledge came upon her like the stroke of a thunderbolt. Her bright eyes beamed with sudden joy and hope, and she thanked heaven for its aid in this powerful shape.

"Enter, my beloved," said Sir Simon, exultingly, as he unlocked and threw wide open the door. "This will be our nuptial chamber, my fair lady-love, priest or no priest. Place the lamp upon that table, Andrew, hastily see what is immediately needed here, and hurry away. Sir, Barton I pray you to attend Andrew, as he is slow of gait. Andrew, you need not be too speedy in arousing the wife of the steward. You understand me. Come, my love, and together we will visit the apartments which are henceforth to be yours."

He reached forth his hand to embrace Lauretta, when Sir Mortimer dealt him a terrible stab in the breast with his dagger, which sent him reeling to the very centre of the apartment.

Though surprised and mortally wounded, Sir Simon half drew his sword, but the active knight was upon him, again stabbing him.

Sir Simon fell, unable to cry for help, and perceiving that he was at the point of death, Sir Mortimer bent over him and raised his visor, saying:

"Infamous libertine, I am Sir Mortimer, the betrothed of this maiden, the son of the man whom your father slew, and this is my first blow for vengeance."

He then grasped the hand of Lauretta, and turning to Andrew, said:

"Now, Andrew Tarl, remember your oath, and aid our escape."

"This way," replied Andrew, who now saw that

the knight was terribly in earnest. "We must escape by the vaults of the palace, for every other exit is guarded."

"May I not pass the guards as Sir Barton?"

"Ay, sir, and be speedily pursued, for this is not a deed to remain long unknown. Come, we have not a moment to lose."

The party now hastened from the spot, and under the guidance of Andrew, who was perfectly acquainted with every hall and stair of the palace, speedily descended to the vaults, in which were stored wines and supplies for the numerous household.

Having safely reached this refuge, Andrew led the lovers to the entrance of a narrow subterranean passage, saying:

"We must pass through this passage; it is said that it was secretly dug by a former servitor of Earl Roger, named Nicholas Flame."

"For what purpose?"

"Who can tell? Though I have heard that Nicholas Flame designed to perpetrate some daring deed upon the earl, and then to make his escape by this passage."

"Faithful Flame!" thought the knight, as they entered the narrow opening. "He intended to carry off the chest, which he believed to contain the body of his murdered master."

"Whither does it lead?" he continued, aloud. "And why has it been suffered to remain unfilled?"

"It passes under a street, and gives secret admittance into the cellar of a house now in ruins. Curiosity led me to follow its course a few weeks ago. The earl had it blocked up, sir; but I easily managed to open it again. I had this secret recess in my mind when I learned you were imprisoned, and intended to use it for your escape."

"You are a noble fellow, and shall not go unrewarded. Hark! Hear ye no noise?"

"Ay! The death of Sir Simon has been discovered," replied Andrew, as they paused to listen. "Haste! It will not be long before some of the earl's retainers search the vaults."

"Ha! Some one is advancing towards us in the passage," said Sir Mortimer, drawing his sword, as a dark and tall form was suddenly discovered, sword in hand.

The stranger made no attempt to retreat, though alone, but continued to advance, until Sir Mortimer exclaimed:

"It is Nicholas Flame!"

"The same, my master; and right glad to see you still alive," replied the printer, joyfully. "So you have the lady with you."

"Push on, push on!" cried Andrew Tarl, eagerly,

"or we may be overtaken; nor do we desire to be pursued."

"The man is right," said Flame, as all hurried on. "I feared for your welfare, Sir Mortimer, and could not remain inactive while you were in peril. I remembered my old work, and, though I feared I should find it filled up, made the trial, intending to slay Roger Vagram as he slept, if all were not well with you. Your worship saw the chest, I hope, and know that I did not fail?"

"I saw it, my friend; but the chest contains not the remains of my father. There is a skeleton in it; the skeleton of a woman."

Good and stout-hearted Nicholas Flame uttered a cry of amazement, but as haste was imperative, he restrained his words of wonder for a more leisurely moment.

It was not long before the party emerged from the passage into the cellar of a ruined house, from which they hastened into the street.

The hour was not far from day-dawn, and the deep darkness favoured their escape.

"We will to my mother's," said Sir Mortimer.

"Not so, if I may speak," interrupted the cautious printer. "It may be that the earl will seek you there."

"I fear him not, now that I am out of his palace."

"You forget the malice of the king, my master."

"I did. Then let us seek refuge temporarily with Sir Albert Tempest," said Sir Mortimer.

"And temporary only it must be," remarked the printer. "No doubt the king, irritated by the chastisement of his assassin, will seek revenge more openly. But do you hasten to the good baron's, while I return to Madame Clain, who must be painfully anxious for your welfare."

"Right, Nicholas, and if you can, conduct my mother and the little girl to the baron's ere daylight."

"There is little time to spare, yet it may be done, Sir Mortimer. I fear the quick vengeance of Sibella Thornbush, who now knows of the existence of your mother. But heaven be with us, and carry us safe through this peril."

With these words the printer darted away, while Sir Mortimer hurried on with Lauretta towards the residence of the baron.

"Rare and joyous tidings have I for those two bereaved hearts," thought the knight, "if what Roger Vagram whispered to me be true, and heaven grant that it may be."

Few words were exchanged by the lovers as they hurried through the deserted streets and vacant fields. Lauretta, trembling both with fear and delight—fear of recapture, and delight in the presence and protection of Sir Mortimer—clung closely to the arm of the knight.

He would have lifted her and carried her in his strong arms, had she permitted, but her modesty refused to submit to so close an embrace, so long as her strength allowed her to support her limbs.

Andrew Tarl, who knew well the shortest route to Tempest House, guided them carefully, and not many minutes had elapsed before they stood beneath the same wall, over which Sir Mortimer had leaped prior to his interview with the baron.

The knight readily scaled the wall, and Andrew knelt upon the ground, so that Lauretta, by standing on his back, could reach the hands of her lover, who easily drew her up to him.

Andrew then scaled the wall and leaped into the garden, where he received Lauretta in his arms as she descended.

"I used to know this garden well," said Andrew, as they moved towards the mansion, "but it is not now as it was. The garden has gone to rack and ruin like the hearts of lord and lady. Often have I watched the infant that was lost, as she plucked and played with the flowers hereabout."

"And she may do so again," thought Sir Mortimer, as they passed through the grounds. "If the story of Roger Vagram be true, I bear joy with me to this unhappy house."

Having reached the rear of the house they were met by an aged domestic, whose return to his quarters had not been long, and who shouted: "Thieves, by the mass!" until Andrew Tarl, who recognised the voice as that of one who had once been his fellow-servant in the house of Sir Albert, clapped his hand upon his mouth and said:

"Hush, Tom Bell. We are friends and would have immediate speech with the noble baron. I am your old comrade, Andrew Tarl."

"So your voice tells me, Andrew," replied the old man; "and I wonder how you dare show your head on these premises. But that is none of my business; so if the baron breaks it with his staff, or my lady gives you a cuff, do not blame me. The name of Andrew Tarl is as unsavoury as a stale fish in Tempest House."

"Cease this prating, man, and let us into the house."

"Come, now! Wait until I have struck a light, my friend. There have been rare doings, I hear, since the household went a May-daying. The baron and his lady have been arrested, tried and freed."

"We know all that, old man," interrupted Sir Mortimer, impatiently. "Haste with the light."

"Who speaks?" cried old Bell, ceasing to strike his flint and steel. "The man who owned that voice is dead and gone these twenty years or more, and yet I know it well. Who is this you have with you, Andrew Tarl?"

"Two—a knight and a lady, who are impatient to see the baron."

Old Bell muttered something as he struck a light, and blowing the tinder into a flame, lighted a candle.

"Let me see! How now? This is Sir Barton Woolfort, if I may judge by the dress and crest. No, Sir Barton, your worship is no friend to my lord the baron, nor is Earl Roger, whom you serve, nor can Andrew Tarl be, who wears the De Montfort livery. Get you gone, my friends, nor seek to disturb the repose of my lord and lady. Good heavens! they have care enough already, Andrew Tarl—"

"I am not Sir Barton, as you may see," said the knight, raising his visor. "Look."

The old man stared for a moment, and then exclaimed, while his voice trembled:

"The grave giveth not up its dead until the last day, or I would call you, Lord Henry, Earl de Montfort."

"Earl de Montfort I may be by right, old man, though that I cannot prove, yet I am not Lord Henry—what, now, old man! are you ill or crazed?"

These rapid questions were caused by the strange antics of the old man as he stared at the face of Lauretta, which he now perceived for the first time.

"Who—who is this—this lady? But that I know my lady the baroness is fast asleep, at least in her bed-chamber, and that she is some twenty years older than this lady, I should think I gazed upon Lady Lottie Tempest, stepped out alive from her picture done in tapestry, which hangs in the baronial library."

"Haste, old man! Perhaps she may be one nearly allied to the noble baroness."

"Say no more! I did dream three weeks ago yesterday—I marked it down, Andrew, as a cunning dream for an old man. I did dream that Sir Barton Woolfort came to Tempest House and wedded a lady here, and that the baron was well nigh crazy with delight. There is a world in dreams, Andrew Tarl, if one may only read them aright, but there is the rub—ah, the door is open, my friends. I pray you enter. So, now follow old Tom Bell, who alone has the privilege to awake the baron—bless his soul! at any hour. Here is the library—the baron is a man given to books—pray remain while I awake him. What name, sir?"

"Sir Mortimer Du Vane, on affairs of vital moment. Tell him, too, to lead the baroness hither."

"I will, but Sir Mortimer, I pray you keep your visor raised and face the door, for the baron may also deem you to be Sir Barton Woolfort, whom he detests, and give you no cordial greeting. And as for you, Andrew Tarl, you had best hide, or the baron will hide you—I faith I'd be anywhere rather than in your hide when my lady sees you."

"Begone old magpie," said Andrew, as the old man departed. "Lady Lottie is as gentle as an angel, and never raised her hand or tongue against a servant."

Sir Mortimer saw Lauretta seated, and then removed his heavy helmet, so that the baron might not be shocked, even for a moment, by the belief that his library was intruded upon by Sir Barton Woolfort.

Andrew Tarl, who knew well the dislike with which he was regarded by the baron and baroness, from former associations, retired somewhat apart. The baron and baroness soon appeared, with much surprise visible in their air and features.

"Ah, Sir Mortimer, what has happened?" exclaimed the baron. "So I see my beauty of the green is with you. Was it to bring her that you came, or are you in peril?"

"This young lady is my betrothed, Sir Albert."

"If she has as fair a soul as she has a face, my friend, you are fortunate. Look, Lady Lottie, this is the maiden of whom I spoke, and whose face has been in my dreams this night."

Lady Tempest had already set her eyes upon Lauretta's charming face, and as she did so her heart swelled with grief, for she thought:

"Ah, had my first daughter lived she would be like this maiden. I love this gentle girl already. It is very strange, for I must weep too."

"Have you no parents, child?" she asked, as she kindly advanced and pressed her lips upon Lauretta's brow.

"None, noble lady. Or if so I have never seen them," replied Lauretta. "I have none to love me or

to care for me, except Sir Mortimer, and, dear lady his love is all the world to me."

"I would share your heart with Sir Mortimer, my child, for I am childless. Oh, my husband! are you ill?"

This last question was caused by a loud exclamation from the baron, his sudden agitation, and wild stare at Lauretta; for Sir Mortimer had whispered in his ear these words:

"Within an hour, Roger Vagram, believing me to be his ruffian, Sir Barton, and plotting to wed Lauretta to his son, whispered these words in my ear: 'Sir Barton, this flower girl is of noble birth, and as I live, she is the daughter of your enemy, Sir Albert Tempest and his proud wife, Lady Lottie. They think the girl was drowned, for so ran the story by my command, yet this maiden is that child. Now you know why I wish to make her the wife of my son.'"

No wonder, then, that the baron could scarcely stand erect under his amazement. His heart leaped to his throat, and there seemed to stand still. His very breathing was checked, and for a moment Sir Mortimer feared that his friend would fall.

"It may not be! Be calm, Sir Albert!" he urged. "Ah, it was very wrong to be so abrupt in telling you."

"No. Wait, and my heart will be quiet again," replied the baron, as his wife hastened to him.

"What has happened, dear husband? Why do you stare at the poor child? See, you have frightened her."

Indeed, poor Lauretta, exhausted by the many trials through which she had passed within a few hours, and unable to surmise why this stately-looking noble should gaze at her with the eyes of one suddenly going mad, was bathed in tears.

The baron sprang towards the bewildered flower girl, and kissing her tenderly, exclaimed, greatly to the wonder of Lauretta and Lady Lottie:

"Roger Vagram may have lied, for the truth seldom escapes his lips; but be what he said true or false, maiden, I will be your father. Lottie, my beloved wife, our enemy, Roger Vagram, declared to Sir Mortimer—"

"Wait, my master," interrupted Andrew Tarl, advancing. "I begin to suspect the truth. Heaven grant that it may be true! But the truth may be a shock, if too suddenly spoken, to my lady."

"You, here?" cried the baron, recognising the old soldier. "Then there was villainy in the matter, as I have ever suspected."

"Not with my knowledge," said Andrew. "Heaven knows I was ever a true and faithful servant to you and my lady, but for my neglect on that black day, I suspected foul play, too, but I dared not accuse an earl."

"Sir Mortimer," said the amazed baroness, pleadingly, "there is some great secret here. I pray you tell me what all this means."

"Tell her, Mortimer, tell her, for she must know; though, if it be false, her heart will break," cried Sir Albert, trembling with emotion.

"Dear lady," said the knight, who now greatly regretted his precipitation in revealing the whispered words of Roger Vagram, "it may be that your daughter is not dead."

"Not dead! My child not dead!" gasped the baroness, sinking into a seat, and pressing her hands upon her bosom. "My heaven! Do I dream all this?"

"Call the maids of the baroness! She swoons!" cried Sir Albert, appalled by the death-like pallor of his wife.

"Call no one," said Lady Lottie, in a firm voice, for she was a woman of great nerve and fortitude. "Call no one, Sir Mortimer. I have lost two children. Tell me which may not be dead, for one was drowned, and the other was stolen, not yet eight years ago."

"I know nothing of the latter, Lady Lottie, but the elder may live; and if I may believe Roger Vagram, when he thought he whispered the secret to Sir Barton, but did tell it to me, this maiden is your daughter, whom you have so long mourned as drowned."

Lady Lottie gazed earnestly upon the beautiful girl, whose blue and fearful eyes were fixed eagerly upon hers and then embraced her, saying:

"My child, or not, I will love you."

"I believe Roger Vagram spoke truly," said the baron, "or at least, think what he said to be true, or he would not have spoken it, as he believed, to Sir Barton. Yet let us hear from the maiden all that she knows of her past life, and how she came to be named Lauretta, for that is the name of my wife, and was the name of our lost infant. Indeed, we do not yet know why Sir Mortimer and Andrew Tarl are here."

"My lord baron," said old Bell, appearing at this moment, and with a face expressive half of terror and half of joy, "there is a stranger below."

"Did him call to-morrow—not now—I am engaged," said she, and smiling at him.

"So I told him, Sir Albert, but he would not go away. He gave me this dagger, and bade me place it in your hands, and say he to whom you gave it craves immediate speech with you."

"What token is this?" said the baron, as he took a sheathed and jewelled dagger from the servant's hands.

"I gave it to him, he said? Let me see, for I have made nought gift for many a year."

He gazed at the dagger, which was of curious and costly make, earnestly, then uttered a cry of surprise, flashed his eyes wildly about and muttered:

"It cannot be! It is impossible! Bell, I gave this to Henry, Earl De Montfort, the day before the battle of Tewton."

"Ay, and by all the saints, my master, Henry, Earl De Montfort, stands without, craving shelter and aid of his old friend, Baron Tempest!" cried Bell, as he hurried after his master, who sprang away to greet one whom he had mourned as dead for twenty-three years.

"The man who slept in the chest is alive!" thought Sir Mortimer, raising his eyes to heaven. "My father lives!"

(To be continued.)

MARGERY.

MARGERY ADAM set her foot upon the bridge, then paused for a last glance over her shoulder. It was indeed a scene worth looking at again—that gray-towered, ivy-mantled mill upon the daisied slope, and the long-broken, daisied wheel, turning idly in the current of the stream, and flinging beads of spray on ferns and lichens, which had somehow found a footing on the stone-arched bridge. But not for these was Margery's pause, though they were picturesque enough in the first flash of sunrise creeping down the mountain range behind. Not for these, but for a glimpse of an open door, in the weird frame where, with pussy at her footstool, sat a placid old dame, knitting away as she listened to the light step of her grand-daughter, and turned her sightless eyes as if they still could look farward.

Light step but heavy heart crossed the bridge with Margery, and left the foam-white gill behind. She kept a by-path winding in and out among high Yorkshire fells, beneath the Alp-like pasture grounds or hanging over orchards and homesteads down in narrow gles. Now and then she crossed a road, and passed some waggoner knitting as he plodded on beside his oxen dragging the cumbersome lumber-cart, on axles that revolved with every revolution of the solid wheels. No other soul was stirring at this hour, unless a boy or girl driving a cow to pasture, or following flocks that decked the mountain side with white.

At last she struck into a wider path—a mere sheep walk, daisied and choked with earth and stones washed down by storms from the steep face of the gorge. A dangerous way to any, save a mountaineer, girdling as it did a precipice which shelved down to a rocky bed, now almost bare, despite occasional springs that trickled from either wall.

But there was a larger rush of water as she turned a sudden cliff. At her foot a gill plunged down, forming a waterfall in its eager haste, as if it meant to fill all the stony bottom. The wild ravine gained in beauty as the girl paused there. The lovely grandeur of gorge and height, of crags fringed with pink mountain ash and tasselled birch, of mossy spray-dipped rocks and violet banks, of the broad foam itself, foam-tipped with rose and gold of sunrise; all these must have charmed an artist less than the girl's figure. She leaned against a rock, a dreamy outlook in her full, brown eyes, her crimson lips half smiling sadly, as one does at even happiest memories, and a rich glow of crimson mantling through the clear brown skin. Short kirtle and crimson kerchiefed bodice showed a well-turned foot and figure, and, in attitude and bearing, there was no little grace—the grace of a strong, frank, active mountaineer, whose sweet nature the rude village life had not been able to render coarse.

She leaned there for one instant. Then she started up, wringing her hands together with a little gesture of impatience, and crossed the bridge of a fallen tree across the stream. She cast a hurried glance around, though she knew that solitude was unbroken. And then she stooped among the rocks, and drew forth from its concealment a coarse, serge mining dress, with which she replaced her kirtle.

And now it was not Margery Adam who once more set forth, but Madge Colbrook, who for the last few months had been regularly working in the coal-pit towards which she was now hurrying. Her broad hat was slouched upon her brow, though there was no longer danger of recognition, since the narrow

neighbourhood of the dales where Margery Adam was known lay behind.

As she walked on, her thoughts went back to the past—to her childhood in the towered mill, when she was the darling of the bluff old miller and his wife—and to the years after, when the grandmother's sight failed, and my lady of the Grange, whose foster-mother was the miller's wife, sent for Margery to be her own little maid; and taught her in those things the old dame no longer could. And in many a lesson besides, for the child was quick and bright. Then she recalled, as if it were but yesterday, how Sir Guy, the lady's only child, heir to the Grange, came home from college; and how all at once it had dawned upon Margery that she must stay no longer at the Grange.

Just there, beside that waterfall, she had told him coldly of that resolution, when for the first and last time he had spoken words of love to her. And that was two long years ago—long by many milestones in her life, so short before. For she had returned to her grandparents—her grandfather had died just after—and when, a year ago, my lady, too, died suddenly, the two women at the mill were left entirely unfriended. For months and months the girl had striven bravely against fate, but at last had found no help, save in the mines, to which she now repaired thus secretly that her grandmother might be spared the knowledge that she worked there, and might believe that she found employment in the neighbouring town. As for Sir Guy, he had gone abroad when Margery first left the Grange. Once, and once only, had he written to her, but that letter was unanswered, though she still kept it as an amulet to ward off despair from her heart. Yet in these last few days the amulet lost its power. For during them Sir Guy had returned to the Grange, and never once come to the mill, as he might have done, to see his mother's aged foster-mother.

There was need of some charm to keep away dark spirits, through the weary day, or midnight, in the pit. The hard men's work performed by Yorkshire miners' girls was a less strain on Margery's strong young frame than the gloom of those subterranean hours. But endless as they seemed, at last they were nearly gone by. She was standing in one of the great gates or galleries, having just heaped her corve—a great basket—with coal, and after watching it swung heavily "up to bank"—as the daylight entrance of the shaft is expressed—she moved away, and set to work to fill another. Just then she chanced to look back towards the opening of the shaft. She was not wont, until the last week, to look round from her task, but in that week a sudden voice, a step, seemed to make her start.

She started now—she shook in every limb, and crouched beside her basket, dropping her brow against the arms she rested on it. For as the corve, with its freight of men, descended the shaft, one flash from lanterns upheld at arms' length below, had revealed all that she dared to see of the graver, older, yet but little altered face and figure, of Sir Guy.

She did not move, nor breathe, as footsteps now approached, now passed, so close that she might almost touch him as he went. So far apart, their hands might never touch through life. And she cowered there and hid her face, and let him go his way, which was not hers.

She had but one corve more to fill, and then she turned to a narrower side gallery branching off from this main one. She had been quick to learn her way in these underground streets, not always laid off at right angles, and the roof of which rested upon great blocks of coal. The ground of the alley into which she passed sloped upward somewhat steeply, and was hardly safe even for the Galloway ponies in use elsewhere in the mine. So notches were cut in the rocky floor, and by their help the pit-women, stooping on hands and feet, were wont to drag up the rude coal-boxes, harnessed to them by a chain. This time Margery's box was empty, and it was comparatively a light task to draw it up after her. But all at once she drew a hard breath and stopped short. For, from a cross-gate before her, came the flickering of a lantern, and the sound of a voice which was no work-woman's. Margery knew Sir Guy was coming back this way—must pass her by.

One instant, and she thought that she must fly—she dared not meet him thus. Another, and she remembered that he could never know her here and thus. The dark breath of the mine upon her face, the dress, the occupation were disguises which he could not penetrate. Yet the degradation of that chain galled her past endurance. She could not creep before him like a beast of burden. She loosed the chain from her wrist, and waited, twisting it about in her hands as if something was amiss with it.

She was standing on a ledge of shale, which jutted out in broken shelves from the edges of the arches from which coal had been dug. She had set her tiny candle down, so that she was left in shadow,

while she could just see the two advancing men. Then the guide, one of the mining overseers, stopped, looked at his watch, and, exclaiming at the hour, and at his own forgetfulness of an order he must deliver, pointed towards the farther end of Margery's gallery, and, promising to rejoin Sir Guy there, struck hastily off into a cross cut.

Sir Guy came leisurely along, swinging his lantern, which cast sharp lights in every nook and cleft, in a hundred weird effects on rugged archways and their black supporting columns. Now he had nearly reached Margery. He flashed a gleam from side to side, hardly observing her, but intent on the formation of the rocks, as he stood under an arch more rugged than the others. When on a sudden, from a distant gallery, there came a heavy shock of blasting—walls and roofs were shaken, and Margery saw the rugged mass above Sir Guy sway slowly to and fro. Instantly she knew what that must bode. She sprang forward with a low cry, with all her force pushed him vehemently aside, and herself fell prone, struck to the earth by the large fragment of a fossil tree loosened from the coal in which it was imbedded. Happily she was but struck down as it swayed; it had not fallen on her. But she had dropped powerless, if conscious, her left arm drooping helplessly at her side. The petrified mass lay between her and the man whose life she had saved.

Horror-stricken, he sprang forward. She had just strength and thought sufficient to shade her face with her uninjured arm, before he bent over, inquiring eagerly if she was hurt.

"It is nothing," she said, in a stifled tone. But when he would have raised her, she moaned out. "A litter—if you would go away and send a litter for me!"

She knew, despite the sharp agony her arm was giving, that she was able, since the first faintness had passed off, to rise without his aid. But through all her suffering, a thought had flashed across her mind. That litter, surely by sending him for that, she might make her escape, and so remain unrecognized.

"But, my poor girl," he said, "I may not leave you thus. It cannot be many moments before my guide returns."

"The litter, the litter! to get away from this dreadful place," she gasped.

He made her a pillow of his coat upon the damp ground, and then turned away unwillingly enough. But, having taken the first steps, he now hastened on, and presently turned the angle pointed out by her.

To stagger painfully to her feet the instant he was out of sight, to knot the kerchief round her neck into a sling for the disabled arm, and to make for a cross-gate, were but the work of a second. Blinded and dizzy with pain, urged breathlessly by fear of his return, she hurried away, following a path which led, she knew by instinct rather than by thought, towards a shaft distant from the direction he had taken. How she reached that shaft she never knew. Now and then, half-swooning, she had leaned for a brief space against the wall, then tottered resolutely on. She gained the shaft just as the cry of "Kenna mon," the signal to leave off work for the first eight-hours' gang, was shouted from above. A corve was just going up to bank: some one, observing her pailor, lifted her up; and soon she found herself standing in the open day, in the glare of the three o'clock sunshine.

She passed, still bewildered, through dingy rows of colliery cabins. But when she had left them behind, in their smoky atmosphere, the fresh air of the hillside revived her, and she went on, though often stopping in extreme exhaustion, till once more the force leaped foaming down before her. She knelt by its broad, though shallow stream, and dashed the water over face and neck; and bathed her favored lips, feeling that her battle had been won, and she might rest. She had no dread of being traced. She did not know that when in the mine she had taken off her kerchief, to form a sling, with the ends tucked in her bodice, she had dragged Guy's letter out and left it lying on the floor.

She must rest yet a little while, and notwithstanding all the pain she underwent, all the anxiety that must be hers, if she should be long disabled for her work, she was very happy in the resting; for she had saved his life, and though he must not know, yet it would comfort her so much. Half reclining, she leaned back against a rock, her absent glance reposing down the gorge, across which the earliest glow of sunset was sinking, setting tree-top, rock, and plashing force ablaze. With sparkles and gleams of red gold, too, it touched the auburn hair which fell uncovered, in heavy ripples, round her throat and bosom, shading the pale face. Only one moment more she might delay, soothed by the gurgling fall of water. That force to her ear thrilled always with accents not its own. She remembered how on that

bright sunset, ending in two gray twilight years, she had heard, as she loitered here:

"Margery! darling!"

Those were the self-same words, yet surely no mere echo from the past. But they chimed in so exactly with the young girl's thoughts, that not for an instant did she fancy them other than that echo.

"Margery!" again.

She lifted up her eyes slowly then. Guy stood there, and but the stream between himself and her. White as death, she strove to rise, and stole a hurried glance around, as if for some escape. But the stream was no longer between. On her first movement, he caught her to his breast, "the saviour of his life—his wife that is to be."

"That must never be, Sir Guy; leave me, I cannot, cannot bear this!"

"Leave you! After seeking you for days!" he cried.

She blushed painfully, and drew back. "Seeking me?" she repeated, with some indignation.

"Aye. When my steward informed me the mill had fallen into disuse, he also informed me that you had found employment in the town. I tried in vain to trace you there—"

"And how have you traced me now?"

He put into her hand a worn and faded letter. "When you fled from me down in the mine," he said, "this stayed to betray you. Margery, through these years my faith, without one pledge from you, has never wavered, and you—were you cold as I believed you, could I have found this letter?"

She had no reply. She turned and hid her face upon his shoulder. "Your rank—" she faltered.

"Buried with the earthworm, but for your aid this day, my sweet one. Look up, Margery, and promise you will make my perfect happiness. Nay, you need not fear to wrong any one. I have no one remaining in this world, save you and yours."

And Margery did look up. Guy had his answer, even though the pale lips parted with no word.

M. R.

PROCLAIMING BANNIS BY MOONLIGHT.—A curious case has just been noticed in the Scotch papers. For some time past a contest has been going on in For-gandenny, N.B., regarding the right to discharge the duties of session clerk. The schoolmaster avers that he has the right, and the person who holds this appointment from the Kirk Session, regards the schoolmaster as an intruder. Recently, two parties had given in notice of their intention to be married, and the proclamation would have been read by the precentor in the usual form, but the minister of the parish, hearing that the proclamation had been drawn out by the schoolmaster, refused to have it read. When the schoolmaster heard of the circumstance he drew out the proclamation anew, proceeded to the gate leading to the church, and read the proclamation of banns by moonlight. No objection was raised, and the parties were married.

THE GREAT BELL FOR WORCESTER CATHEDRAL.—The long-expected bell has arrived from Loughborough, conveyed upon one of the Midland Railway Company's waggons, drawn by three horses gaily decked with ribbons, to the cathedral. This bell, which is 6 ft. 4½ in. in diameter, is not to form one of the peal in the cathedral tower; but it is to be the clock bell, to strike the hours. The motto on it is "Surge qui dormis, ex exsurge a mortuis, et illumina-bit te Christus!"—that is, as in the English version,—"Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." This motto appears round the crown of the bell. Round the waist there are coats of arms. Below there is the following inscription: "In usum Ecclesie Cathedralis Christi et beate Marie Virginis in civitate et comi-tatu Vigorniensis, Johannes Taylor, Loughboro'. Fudit A.D. 1868," which may be Englished thus:—"For the use of the Cathedral Church of Christ and the blessed Virgin Mary, in the city and county of Worcester. John Taylor, Loughborough. Founded A.D. 1868." There are round the bell four rows of Gothic ornamentation.

GRIEVANCES OF SCOTCH PEERS.—The following document, now in circulation, gives a statement of the political position of the Scotch peers—a subject which has lately been invested with new interest by the course taken at the late election in regard to Lord Rollo:—"At the time of the union between England and Scotland (1707) there were 164 Scotch peers and only 20 Irish ones who were not peers of the United Kingdom. No man can be created a peer of Scotland; and not one has been created or advanced in Scotch rank since 1707; but since then no less than 133 Irish peers have been created, of whom 101 were created between the Scotch Union (A.D. 1707) and the Irish Union (A.D. 1800), and 32 have been created since 1800, and lately one has got a step in the Irish peerage. Scotland sends only 16 representatives,

and these are only elected for one Parliament. Ireland sends 28, all elected for life. Scotch peers cannot sit in the House of Commons (and probably few would wish to do so), but Irish peers sit in the House of Commons as representatives of English people. There are now actually only 27 Scotch peers who have no seat in the House, and if the doors were opened to these and the 20 Irish peers who were peers in 1707, it would be just to all parties, and only add 47 to the House—a number before now created by one Prime Minister. The great grievance under which the old Scotch and Irish peers labour is, that all newly-created peers at once take their seats as peers in the House, whilst the doors are closed to them (the old Scotch and Irish). A strange anomaly is, that such of the Scotch and Irish peers as are also peers of the United Kingdom vote in person in the House, and yet send representatives to vote also, so that every one of these peers has more than one vote in the House, and the majority of his nominees may sit on different sides of the House; for instance, a duke voted that the State Church in Ireland should be abolished, but the majority of his representatives voted the other way!"

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

To make an amusing sympathetic ink, mix lemon and onion juice. Writing or pictures made with this mixture on plain white paper, will, when dry, be invisible. But on warming the paper before a fire the lines will appear in brown tints. Very pretty effects may be thus produced.

TO REVIVE THE COLOUR OF BLACK CLOTH.—Take of blue galls, bruised, four ounces; logwood, copperas, iron filings, free from grease, and sumach leaves, each one ounce. Put all but the iron filings and copperas into one quart of good vinegar, and set the vessel containing them in a warm water bath for twenty-four hours, then add the iron filings and copperas and shake occasionally for a week. It should be kept in a well-corked bottle. It may be applied to faded spots with a soft sponge. It is good also to restore the black colour of leather when it turns red, the leather being previously well cleaned with soap and water.

TO PREPARE SILK FOR PAINTING UPON.—Should the finished work be intended as a decoration for a box, or other such purpose, it will be well to have the mounting completed; or, if this is not possible, have the silk tacked on to a board by thread, passing from the edges tightly over the back. But first of all have some good thick blotting paper, cut the exact size, and placed beneath; then with some size (a used white kid glove, cut into shreds, and boiled in a jam-pot placed in a saucepan half filled with water, is best) begin to stipple the outlines of the design (previously transferred in the usual way); after the whole surface to be coloured is so sized, proceed to tint with colours mixed with the same; have at hand some French chalk powder to check spreading. If the surface has been insensibly soiled by handling, then some ox gall will help the colour to adhere.

CHAPPED HANDS, ETC.—In the season of cold winds many suffer from chapped hands, lips, and faces. The following course will scarcely fail to cure, and is almost certain to prevent these inconveniences. Wash the chapped surface with fine soap, and while the soap is on the hands place in the palm a tablespoonful of Indian meal. Before removing the soap, scrub the hands thoroughly with the meal and the soap, then rinse the hands thoroughly with soft tepid water until all trace of the soap is removed, using a little meal each time until the last, which will aid greatly in removing the soap and dirt from the cracks in the cuticle. Finally, wipe the hands very thoroughly and rinse them in enough water to moisten their surface, in which has been poured a quarter of a teaspoonful of pure glycerine, dry them without wiping, using a mild heat, and rubbing them until the water has all evaporated. By this process, the dirt will have been all removed, and in its stead will remain a coating of glycerine. The effect of this application will be apparent by morning, if it be made upon retiring to rest; and whoever tries it once will do it a second time. The glycerine must be pure, however, or it will irritate instead of healing.

PARISIAN HOUSEHOLD OF AN EGYPTIAN PRINCE.—The Viceroy of Egypt has sent one of his sons to Paris to "complete his education," and another to England for the same purpose. It seems that the practice of economy does not enter into the Egyptian Sovereign's notions of instruction, for the young prince located at Paris has been allowed to hire for himself an entire mansion in one of the first quarters, at a very high rent, though it is the custom there,

even for wealthy people, to content themselves with "apartments." The prince has also been allowed to spend between 2,000*l.* and 3,000*l.* in decorating the interior. He is now engaged in buying furniture for it, and what his notion of the furniture needed is, may be judged from the fact that he has given 800*l.* for a single carpet. In his stables he has already placed twelve horses, Arab or thoroughbred English, and numerous carriages of different kinds; and though wine-drinking is prohibited to the disciples of Mahomet, he is having his cellar stocked with the very best, and consequently the most costly wines.

THE QUEEN'S INCOME.

So much nonsense is constantly talked, and such erroneous notions are held, respecting the Queen's income, that it can hardly be considered a work of supererogation to put the precise facts before the public. By an Act passed soon after her Majesty's accession, in which the Queen waives her right to and interest in certain hereditary rates, charges, duties, and revenues, which by her prerogative she might have claimed, the civil list, i.e., her income, is fixed at 885,000*l.* per annum.

Many people have an idea that this sum is actually paid to the Queen every year. Such is not the case. The civil list is divided into six classes.

Class 1 really represents the amount of money paid to her Majesty for her private use. This amount is 60,000*l.*, which is payable in monthly instalments as long as her Majesty lives.

Class 2, which appropriates 131,260*l.*, is for the payment of the salaries of her Majesty's household.

Class 3 appropriates a still higher sum, 172,500*l.*, and is for the expenses of the household. Royal housekeeping and royal parties and balls must be kept up on a royal scale, and anyone who has visited Buckingham Palace-mews and the Windsor stables—not to mention the royal kitchen—will not wonder that this sum finds plenty of channels for its disposal.

The amount of Class 4 is small, and its purposes are almost entirely charitable. Out of the sum of 13,000*l.*, 9,000*l.* is devoted to what are termed "Royal bounty grants," and "special service awards."

Class 5, which consists of the payments made as pensions to deserving literary and scientific persons, or to any that have deserved the gratitude of their country, does not come out of the 885,000*l.*; but by a special clause in the Act before referred to, the sum of 1,200*l.* is set apart from the Consolidated Fund in each year of the Sovereign's reign for this purpose. The civil list pensions now amount to upwards of 17,000*l.*, after allowing for deaths.

Class 6 may be regarded as a sort of reserve fund. The amount of it is 8,040*l.*, and it may be used towards meeting a deficiency in any of the other classes.

A CURIOUS LAND-SLIP has occurred near Youghal, which the country people consider an earthquake. The public road, which is now impassable, sank for about ten yards in length, to a depth of seven feet, and several holes appear, beyond this space, for a distance of a quarter of a mile, about one foot wide and six or seven feet deep. The walls on either side of the road are much shaken, and the adjacent fields show in parts evidence of disturbance. It is also stated that the sand of the river Blackwater, close to the road, was thrown up in heaps.

THEY married are longer lived than the single; and above all, those who observe a sober and industrious conduct. Tall men live longer than short ones. Women have more chances of life previous to the age of fifty years than men, but fewer after. The number of marriages is in proportion of 75 to 100. Marriages are more frequent after the equinoxes—that is, during the months of June and December. Those born in spring are generally more robust than others. Births and deaths are more frequent by night than by day. The number of men capable of bearing arms is calculated at one-fourth of the population.

OYSTERS.—Whitstable oysters have ever been noted for their plumpness and peculiarly delicious flavour. Poor, lean, insipid oyster are brought from Jersey, and other places, and deposited at the bottom of the sea off Whitstable and the Isle of Sheppey; and in a short time they, too, acquire the same fullness and agreeable flavour. What is the cause of this? It may be owing to the healthy tincture suitable for oysters imparted to the sea-water by the blue clay which forms the cliffs and bed of the sea of this locality. This blue clay is of the same character as that which overlies the bed of chalk under London. If this theory be right, would not the oysters, sold in the oyster-shops, be better fed, and improved in flavour, by putting a lump of this blue clay in each tub over night? The experiment is simple and worth trying.



SOMETIMES SAPPHIRE SOMETIMES PALE.

By J. R. LITTLEPAGE.

CHAPTER XV

Lady Clara Vere de Vere.

Of me you shall not win renown;

You thought to break a country heart,

For pastime are you come to town.

Tennyson.

THE person who entered the room without knocking, and who approached the fireplace slowly, with a measured pace, with a stately haughtiness, was none other than Cathleen's mother. Mrs. Lamotte wore ruby velvet, her large arms were bare, her bodices was sparkling with diamonds. She was dressed for dinner, as also was the heiress. The two magnificently-apparelled ladies seemed out of place in the simply-furnished room of the tutor, with its bookshelves, its chintz-covered seats, its plain mahogany table. Earnshaw attempted to rise and bow to Mrs. Lamotte; Cathleen prevented him.

"You know that Doctor West told you to remain as quiet as possible," said Cathleen. "Well, mamma, and so you are come to see how the patient is getting on, are you?" continued Miss Lamotte, turning to her mother.

Mrs. Lamotte had been actuated by no such kindly motive, and Cathleen was perfectly aware of that fact; but the heiress was a daring, dashing creature, and scruples seldom held her back from expressing any wild thought which entered her head.

"I came especially to inform you that Lord Beechfield has arrived unexpectedly on his return from London; he sent his luggage on from the station, and he is come, late as it is, to pay his respects to Mr. Lamotte; who invited him to dine. You must come down at once, and entertain him."

Thus spoke the lady.

Cathleen shrugged her white shoulders, and made a grimace.

"Lord Beechfield would have done better to have returned home straight to Glenmore; I could have dispensed with his charming society most admirably. I am always resigned, under the trial of a long separation from his august presence."

"Cathleen, I must desire you to come with me at once," said Mrs. Lamotte, imperiously.

"And suppose the naughty child turns restive, and refuses to come?" retorted Cathleen, planting herself close to the mantelpiece, as though she meant to take up her position there for some hours.

[DIAMONDS, NOT HEARTS, ARE TRUMPS.]

She glanced at Earnshaw as she spoke, expecting to read that reproof in his face, which he nearly always expressed during her moods of defiance and pretty insolence. To her surprise, she only met a smile of sympathy on the tutor's handsome face. This change set her thinking.

"Miss Lamotte, the dinner-bell will sound in five minutes," said Mrs. Lamotte.

"I shall be delighted to hear it, since I am hungry; I ate nothing at luncheon," said Cathleen, calmly.

Perhaps the anger of Mrs. Lamotte might have been greater in a few moments, but the dinner-bell rang through the house at that very instant, and Miss Lamotte had no excuse to linger any longer in the room of the tutor. Cathleen could not now prevent Earnshaw from crossing the room and holding the door open for her to pass out; as she did so, she offered him her jewelled hand. He took it respectfully, but did not press the fairy fingers.

When she was gone he returned, threw himself into the chair, and looked moodily at the fire.

"She is a fine creature," he said to himself, "and her mother is disagreeably ill-bred. I begin to dislike her much, and all my feelings, unfortunately, are so strong, that while my affection becomes adoration, my dislike grows into hatred; the very evil against which I have just warned sweet Cathleen when speaking of her cousin. But yet that lady has behaved brutally—yes, brutally," repeated poor Earnshaw, now speaking aloud in his vehemence, "she knows that I am injured by her spoilt nephew's wickedness, she sees me invalidated in my chair, and she utters not one word of pity, nor even of common civility, she makes no inquiry after my wound, she never even says 'good evening.' I am ashamed of myself for encouraging Cathleen in her undutifulness, but I was nettled, and then this Lord Beechfield. Who is this Lord Beechfield? Are they going to persuade Miss Lamotte into a marriage with him? I must find out who Lord Beechfield is."

At this moment there was a light rap on the door of Earnshaw's room; his heart gave a wild leap; could it be Cathleen again?

"Come in, please," said the tutor, gently.

Whereupon the door opened, and a handsome young man entered, whom the tutor recognised as Oscar Arkwright, the rector's nephew. Earnshaw returned the bow which Oscar made him, though this time without rising from his chair.

"You must excuse the intrusion," said the rector's nephew, seating himself, without ceremony. "I am come, first, to inquire how your arm is; and, secondly, to enjoy the pleasure of a little private chat with you, Mr. Earnshaw, if you have no objection."

"Not the least in the world," said Earnshaw. "Pray consider yourself quite at home."

"I generally do," replied Oscar, laughing, so as to show his handsome teeth. "I generally make myself at home, Mr. Earnshaw, wherever I may be; and now, if you will permit me, I will stir this fire into a warmer blaze." As he spoke, Oscar caught up the poker, and stirred the fire lustily. "There," said he, clasping his hands over his knee, and lolling backwards in a peculiarly easy attitude, "that is the fashion in which I make myself at home, Mr. Earnshaw. And now to begin our little colloquy. How goes the arm?"

"It is painful, but it will be well in a few days," said Earnshaw.

"Yes, if you manage to keep away fever. I would not drink wine, were I in your place."

"Indeed," said Earnshaw, shortly.

"No, indeed, I would not," returned the nephew of the rector. "You must know I have passed some time in London with a medical man. I am half a doctor. Don't take wine to-morrow, nor next day, and let me prescribe a cooling draught."

"But Doctor West has already prescribed for me, thank you," returned Earnshaw, with a slight smile, "and he has not forbidden wine."

"Ah, well," said Oscar, waving his hand and laughing his scornful laugh, "I leave you in his hands, albeit that he is a sad old woman; all these country doctors are."

"I have faith in Doctor West," said Earnshaw, gravely.

"Ah, well, so be it, so be it; don't let me disturb that faith," replied Oscar, lightly. "And now, will you be displeased to hear that the august master of this most noble mansion has engaged me as his new land-steward. I shall occupy apartments adjoining yours, a sort of private sitting-room where I shall make up the accounts, a bedroom, and that large room through which we must pass to reach this one is to be the general sitting-room and dining-room for you and me together. We shall dine, sup, and sometimes breakfast together, you and I. Squire Lamotte has informed me so. These rooms thus portioned off have always been used for the accommodation of dependants of the upper class, tutors, secretaries, land-stewards and so on. I suppose as yet it is impossible to say whether or not we shall become friends; anyhow, I hope we may prove agreeable comrades occasionally."

"I hope so, Mr. Arkwright," said Earnshaw.

There was a certain mockery, an indescribable insolence in all this talk of Oscar Arkwright's, which a little nettled Earnshaw in spite of himself. But

against whom was the insolence directed? It did not seem to Earnshaw that it was exactly aimed at him.

Oscar continued:

"A few years or months of submission, more or less, to the will, the caprices, the pride, the tyranny of these upper classes, cannot much hurt you or myself. I may speak openly to you, for if you have the heart of a man, which I believe you have, you must have chafed, I think, already, under the insults, cold, studied, and altogether detestable of Mrs. Lamotte. The squire, too, is a solid mountain of pride; while, as for the caprices of Mademoiselle," Oscar laughed, "my dear young fellow, don't suffer your life to be made a prey to that most hard and merciless coquette—don't, I beg of you."

Oscar's blue eyes deepened to their most exquisite hue of sapphire, while he watched the effect of his words on the dark face of Earnshaw.

For a moment a glow overspread his clear brown cheek, a colour as of smothered fire. This passed away, and left the tutor pale, but with a look at once manly, proud and resigned in his dark eyes.

"He is desperately smitten," thought Oscar to himself, "now to undermine his opinion of this damsel. He is a man who cannot love what he considers evil; so let me blacken your character, fairest Cathleen, in the eyes of this heroic-looking tutor, whom you begin to like so much. Before I set regularly about my work, I like to have my way perfectly clear."

"Cathleen Lamotte," continued Oscar, folding his arms, and smiling at the fire, as though he were talking to himself, and aware of Earnshaw's presence, "Cathleen Lamotte is a type of the 'Girl of the Period'; you have lived so long abroad, that I must suppose you ignorant of the existence of that most selfish amalgamation of folly, heartlessness, greed, worse even!"

"You are not alluding to Miss Lamotte," broke forth Earnshaw, passionately.

Oscar looked up at Earnshaw, with a well-acted expression of intense surprise.

"Are you going to quarrel with me, my dear Earnshaw, for expressing what everybody knows to be the truth about the heiress at the Towers. Surely I hope you have not been weak enough, (excuse the word, I mean no offence) to be carried away by the strange lady's kindness and solicitude after your welfare. You do not think it real, do you?"

"I hardly understand you, sir," replied Earnshaw, speaking more warmly. "Miss Lamotte has been kind to me; I feel grateful; I do not like to hear you apply such violent terms of reproach to a lady who has condescended to show me a great deal of kindness."

"Exactly so. I defer to you," said Oscar, bowing slightly. "You prefer then to find out all these peculiarities in the lovely heiress by experience? You do not wish to hear what I could tell you? You despise warning? Be it so—I will be silent."

Oscar folded his arms once more, and instead of only smiling at the fire, he actually laughed at the flickering flames as they went blazing up the chimney. "How awfully the wind moans about this old mansion," he said, presently.

Earnshaw fidgeted in his chair. He wished intensely to hear all that Oscar had to communicate. When we love we are eager to know every circumstance connected with the object of our devotion.

Oscar knew perfectly well, that in a few moments Earnshaw would ask him to talk more about Miss Lamotte; he waited. At last it came.

"You may as well tell me, Mr. Arkwright, what you were about to say. I am not obliged to place credence in the reports and rumours of a country village; but I should like to know what the gossips say of this glorious-looking creature."

"Ah, is she not handsome?" said Oscar, beginning to nurse his foot, and rocking himself in a childish fashion to and fro. "Such splendid dark eyes, how they seem to look one through; such a queenly form, and yet as slight as a sylph; such a delicate rose-leaf tinting on the pure cheek. She is a witch in beauty; but you have doubtless read some of the old legends regarding witches. Their exquisite loveliness was only a bait to entrap unwary men."

Often times a creature, as entrancing as Cathleen, would appear to some hapless student, working, pale and anxious by the light of his lamp, and would promise him her love. The wretch became mad; he would neglect his books, his studies; wander about the streets all day, looking for the phantom that had beguiled him, believing it to be flesh and blood.

"At last the beautiful fiend comes to him once more, and tells him to meet her on a lone moor at the dreary hour of midnight, when wintry winds are howling over the waste."

"He goes. He stands shelterless; presently, like a flash of light, she stands beside him, she gives him, perhaps, her cold, white hand; but she will not permit him to press the roses of her cheek

with his hot lips. He must follow her at once to the castle of her father, which is near. She points as she speaks to a portion of the horizon, where against a belt of fire, dimly visible by the faint and uncertain light of the clouded moon, he perceives a castle, with red lights in the windows.

"Follow me thither," she whispers, 'within that castle are fire, warmth, delicious food, music, troops of friends. My tyrant father is out—come and sup with me, and we will exchange rings. I will be your bride.'

"As she speaks, she leads the way, and the deluded one follows her. She passes on swiftly, and now and anon her laughter rings out on the night, for let the lover do what he will, he cannot keep pace with that tyrant. He falls, he gets up again, bruised and faint; but he follows her to the castle, whose red lights gleam against the belt of fire. He reaches it, and the exquisite form he is pursuing, passes in with a light laugh; the door is closed in his face. Shouts of mockery assail his ears—anon a window is raised, and a face looks out at him, it is the face of the beautiful woman.

"This has been but the trial of your love," she says. 'We will not let you in to-night. Return to your home, and perhaps another time you may hear from me.'

"The lover howls with fury; he flings himself on the earth, he calls for punishment on the deceitful creature, and then he tries to find his way home. The glamour falls from his eyes. It is morning; the gray light breaks coldly over the moor. Where is the castle? It is gone! Only mouldering ruins are seen, about which the bats flap their wings, and within whose recesses the owl sits hooting. More marvels still. It was winter time when the pale student set off from his home. Now it is a summer morning, the heather springs at his feet, the lark sings at the azure gate of heaven, the distant foliage is of emerald verdure. More wonders yet. The student had set out, that night, a youth, with smooth cheeks, thick raven hair, erect frame. Now, by the glorious light of the summer morning, he appears as a man, feeble, aged, and decrepit. He has passed almost fifty years in wandering after the fiend who has beguiled him. The time had gone by as though in one night. The miserable student is a white-haired, tottering man of seventy-five years old, beggared, clothed in rags, without a friend left alive in the world. He turns aside towards a heap of refuse piled on one side of the road. He dares not enter his native place, the face of which has become changed to him; he lies in dull despair until eventide, and then he dies; his body is found and buried as that of a pauper. All this has come about through his listening to the blandishments of a syren."

Oscar told the story well, with dramatic force and eloquent gesture. Earnshaw could not choose but listen to him with a sort of pleased attention.

"You have related the old legend well, Mr. Arkwright, but tell me where the moral points to me?" said the tutor.

"Is it not plain to the comprehension of a school-child?" asked Arkwright. "I speak of Cathleen Lamotte, cruel Cathleen, the remorseless coquette, who is laying siege to your heart, that she may get it into her own possession, and break it without mercy! She is known in the three counties as the most desperate flirt. Upon the altar of her insatiable vanity she offers up the groans, the blighted lives, in some cases the ruined minds of her victims. It matters not to the heiress of the Towers whether it be a tutor, a poor curate, a portionless younger son, a hapless and sensitive, because penniless and gifted artist or poet, any and all of them she will flatter into loving her, then turn round and trample them into the dust; tell them, in measured accents of scorn, of the wide gulf which separates a patrician belle from a shabby-coated man of letters, or an humble dependant."

Earnshaw covered his eyes with his hand; there seemed much truth in the picture which this young man had drawn of Miss Lamotte. It was easy to see that pride was a part of her nature; whence then the solicitude, the kindness, the flattering words she had spoken? On some occasions too, she had shown Earnshaw her high mettle, her contempt, her pretty insolence. It seemed to the tutor that his companion had only uttered words of friendly warning, and he resolved to be upon his guard. A feeling akin to anger stirred in his heart against Miss Lamotte. There was a something positively fiendish in this character which Arkwright had sketched. Doubtless she had deceived men into loving her; and perhaps some deaths, some ruined minds, the misery of the sorrowing relatives of her victims lay at her door.

"No, she shall not write my name among the list of those whom she has driven to despair," said Earnshaw to himself. "Thank heaven it is not too late, I might have yielded up my mind and heart to this cruel woman; and in time I might have learnt

to cherish vain hopes, who can tell? She shall find me utterly imperious, henceforth, to her blandishments."

"You seem to take it a little seriously," said Oscar, with a slight laugh.

"I am learning new depths in human nature," responded Earnshaw, with a grave smile. "I had hardly thought so fair a form could have clothed so evil a spirit."

Oscar laughed.

"And yet you are a year or two older than I am. You ought to know something more of the world," said he.

"I have studied books more than men," replied the tutor, with a stern frown.

"Ah, well, now you will have a famous chance of studying not only men but women," cried Oscar, gaily. "Do you not think the vulgar pride of that woman, Mrs. Lamotte, is detestable, is excluding me, the rector's nephew, from her dinner-table? I lunched with them to-day, but I was not asked to dine, only told that a horse would be lent me to ride home. True I am not in evening costume," Oscar glanced at his rough suit, "and I would not have dined with such stately people, but they invited me; but they might have had the grace to ask me. Mrs. Lamotte gives unmistakable signs of her middle-class origin, when she speaks so emphatically her ideas of distinction of class; by purposely excluding everybody beneath her, she is an odious woman."

When Oscar spoke of the haughty lady whom he so much detested the blue lights in his eyes burnt pale. Earnshaw, watching his face, was struck by the remarkable expression and change of colour in those fine eyes.

"I perceive," he said, "that you dislike Mrs. Lamotte exceedingly; neither have you an exalted opinion of her daughter. You think the squire proud and distant, and I do not think you far wrong in your judgment. Taking all this together, I am amazed at a man of your youth, talent, and spirit, accepting a situation of dependence in a house like this."

Oscar moved his hand gracefully.

"You are not more surprised, my dear sir, than I am at finding you here," said the rector's nephew, speaking politely.

"No, that is different," returned Earnshaw. "I am something of an author. I belong of right to the world of letters. I have received an university education, and I am fitted to instruct in classics and foreign languages. I could not live by writing books or painting pictures, until my name was known; in the meanwhile, I gladly accept a lucrative post, which affords me every personal comfort, much leisure to pursue my studies, a pleasant home—numberless advantages. Why the very pictures, statues, and library in this house, are a study for a lifetime. I do not want to dine with Mrs. Lamotte. I have a good dinner sent to me here. As for mademoiselle being a coquette, can that matter to a poor tutor? It ought not to Mr. Arkwright."

"Nevertheless," said Oscar, pushing away his chair from beside the fire, and rising to his feet, "I think you will have to thank me for a very timely warning, Mr. Earnshaw." Oscar held out his hand. "I will wish you good night now. I hope, when I come on Monday, I shall find you quite well. By the way, do you know that Miss Lamotte's future husband, the rich, elderly peer, is in the dining-room. Lord Beechfield, that is the man she means to marry. He has eighty thousand a year; Miss Cathleen will inherit a like sum; it will be a match after the heart of the proud squire and the lady-mother. There is some talk of a German prince, but the solid wealth of this old sinner will carry the day."

Earnshaw winced; he could not contemplate the marriage of Cathleen without a pang.

"Good night, Mr. Arkwright," he said, politely. "Oh, well, I will, in vulgar parlance, make myself scarce," said the rector's nephew, smiling; "and I will send the servant to you with coffee, shall I?"

"Whatever you like," replied Earnshaw, absently. Oscar went out. When he found himself in the lighted corridor, he laughed:

"I have settled the state of his affections, I think. Mademoiselle Cathleen will find her tutor somewhat sulky, it strikes me; her pride will take offence. Yes, I have made a rupture. I have crushed the little love in the bud."

CHAPTER XVI

Oh! I see thee old and formal, fitted to thy puny part;
With a little host of maxims, preaching down a daughter's heart.
Lancelotti Hall.

AMID the gold and azure splendour of the Dungenon drawing-room, the Earl of Beechfield was basking in the light of Cathleen's smiles. The coquette's heiress was on her best behaviour, she talked long and kindly with the rich noble, whom her mother coveted for her as a husband.

The earl was a tall, dissipated-looking man of fifty-five, or thereabouts. He had been good-looking in his youth, but now his face was covered with wrinkles. He had a false smile, which displayed the perfection of his false teeth; his head was bald, but it was adorned with a wig of rich, curling, light-brown hair; his bushy light eyebrows had a sinister curve, which lent a wicked expression to the hard, gray eyes. Lord Beechfield was padded in the chest and rounded upon the cheeks. Altogether his was a painted, smirking, false face.

He bent his head in apparent and courtly humility while Miss Lamotte talked to him. He listened to all she said with the greatest attention, and he expressed a strong approval for the sentiments she gave utterance to. Cathleen was coquette enough to appear thoroughly delighted with the attention and society of my Lord Beechfield. The old noble was completely deceived by the amiable gaiety of the young heiress.

While this scene of hollow flirtation was going on at one end of the drawing-room, Mr. Lamotte and his daughter-in-law were playing at cards at another.

The mother of Cathleen looked unfeeling and placid as was her wont, but the old Squire was by no means calm.

"Watch them," he whispered impatiently to Mrs. Lamotte; "tell me if that saucy girl of yours appears to be acting with anything like common civility towards our noble guest."

Mrs. Lamotte gave a sleepy, haughty glance in the direction of her daughter.

"She is in apparent ecstasy," said the lady, coldly.

"She is often in apparent ecstasy when she is only deceiving us all the time," growled the stately squire, biting his thin lips. "I mean to talk to her to-night. Before I sleep I mean to tell her that the Earl of Beechfield has proposed to me formally for her hand, and awaits his answer from herself; and I mean to tell her that it is my express wish, and your decided command, that she accept the coronet which is laid at her feet."

Mrs. Lamotte absolutely sighed, and looked with a frown at her cards.

"Cathleen is so headstrong," said she.

Mr. Lamotte smiled a very scornful smile.

"Madame forgets," he said, in a fierce whisper, "that I hold the keys of her future; the property is mine, my own. If I choose to disinherit your daughter, what will become of her? and unless she marry to please me, I assuredly will."

Mrs. Lamotte actually flushed a little; the colour rose faintly into her smooth, plump cheeks, and an uneasy look filled her large, sleepy eyes.

"I will talk to her," said the lady.

"Ha, I will talk to her," retorted the squire, in an impetuous whisper. "Ah, he is leading her to the piano—now she will charm him with music. I wonder whether he has told her that he wishes to make her the Lady of Glenmore Castle? What a prize for the idiot! And to ally our name once more with the peerage."

"Cathleen is far from being an idiot," said Mrs. Lamotte, "she is far too knowing and shrewd."

"She is an idiot with regard to marriage," said Mr. Lamotte; "she has all sorts of fantastic notions about love, and all that rubbish."

"I cannot believe that a daughter of mine would ever seriously harbour such disgraceful notions," said the woman of the world.

"I do not think Cathleen will ever love anybody but herself."

"I wish I could think so," replied the squire, "but I am afraid there is a vast deal of romantic nonsense hidden under the rattling spirits of that girl of yours."

Thus the pair chatted on until the evening was far advanced, and the footmen brought in coffee, upon silver salvers.

Then the four personages met around the fire. Lord Beechfield seemed in high spirits; compliments flowed from his lips like waters from a summer fountain, with all the smoothness, sparkle and dash. He had been a courtier all his lifetime, and those women who delighted in flattery invariably pronounced the Earl of Beechfield to be a charming person.

It was difficult to decide whether Cathleen Lamotte was of this opinion or not. She seemed delighted with the earl. When the time came for him to retire, he paused, with the small golden night-lamp in his hand, and looked with admiration upon the peerless beauty of the heiress.

"Good-night, fairest of ladies," he said with his courtly smile.

Then, raising the tips of Cathleen's fingers to his lips, with his disengaged hand, he bowed profoundly.

"Would that I might hope to meet you in dream-land," said the antiquated but fashionable lover. "Your sweet presence there would set all the dream birds chanting, all the dream flowers blooming, but I

shall at least meet you at breakfast, till that happy time, adieu."

When he was gone, Cathleen threw herself into an arm-chair, and laid her lovely head back among the cushions.

"How very tired I am," she said, "of listening to that odious old man. He always fatigues me so."

Mr. Lamotte came and planted himself in front of his granddaughter. He smiled an angry smile, and his face grew white.

"I do not choose to have my most respected guest alluded to in those terms, Miss Cathleen Lamotte," he said.

Cathleen opened her large eyes, and a very scornful light flashed from them upon her grandpapa.

"Very well," she said, "since you so much admire him, I won't mention his name again in your presence. Let us talk of something else."

"By no means, madam," said the owner of the Towers, almost savagely. "You and I will have, I imagine, numbers of conversations, of which the earl will form the subject. He has condescended to propose for you, madam," continued the squire, now speaking with a loud and angry emphasis, "to propose to you, who have no fortune, unless I choose to give you one. You, whose mother is the daughter of a manufacturer. You ought to go down upon your knees and thank him."

"My father was a man of noble fortune, and when your son married me, your son was penniless," said Mrs. Lamotte, whose pale face had positively flushed to a deep red.

"Don't let us disagree, you and I," said the squire, waving his hand to his son's widow. "I only wish to bring your daughter to a sense of her duty. Tell me, Cathleen, shall I tell Lord Beechfield that you accept him?"

"No, no, no!" cried Cathleen, beating her small foot on the rich carpet. "Never, never, never!"

"That is all dramatic folly," said the squire, now placing himself by the side of his granddaughter upon another seat. "I wish you to marry Lord Beechfield."

"Then I won't," said Cathleen, determinedly. "Never mention the subject to me again!"

"Are you aware, madam," asked Mr. Lamotte, still speaking with his angry smile; "are you aware that I could cast you forth to-morrow to earn your bread, if I chose? You are my lawful heiress, so long as you are obedient, but if you presume to cross me, I will as surely disinherit you, as surely make over my eighty thousand a-year to charitable institutions, as that I hold this gold cup in my hand."

He took up an expensive ornament from the table as he spoke.

Cathleen grew very pale; she had never, in all the proud, careless days of her life, anticipated the possibility of her grandfather's disinheriting her. She was as haughty as Lucifer, loved wealth, and all the pomp it brought. To become a poor toiling governess, to walk in shabby boots upon the London pavements, and to see the mud from the chariot wheels of the wealthy splashing her poor garments; why, she would rather have died, she told herself, a hundred times over. The heiress was silent for a moment, and the squire watched the changes in her lovely face with intense satisfaction.

"It is time you were married," he said; "you have flirted away your time long enough. You may never have one of the first peers at your feet again. You may have peers' sons, but the mixture of the Manchester manufacturer's blood in your veins will be sometimes an objection; besides, your wealth is not your own till my death. People know that."

"But grandpapa, I don't wish to marry at all," said poor Cathleen, in a half-crying tone; "it seems hard, I think—"

"Not in the least," interrupted the stern squire, still with his angry smile. "I am not a very young man, and I have no doubt that you imagine I shall depart this life in a few years, and leave you all the estates. Then you might marry whoever you liked, a consumptive curate, with thirty pounds a-year, an artist, with nothing but his canvases, and a load of debts to recommend him, or even this handsome, dark tutor of your cousin's, whom your mother seems much afraid of, or she would not hate him so."

Cathleen's pale face burnt with a sudden and vivid blush, when her grandfather spoke these taunting words.

"It is a shame, it is a cruel shame," she said, "to taunt me in that manner."

"Then accept Lord Beechfield," said Mr. Lamotte; "show your mother that you have no unworthy thought."

"Unworthy," she repeated, passionately, and she whispered to her own heart: "The one is noble as heaven made him, in face, in form, in heart, in life. The other is noble only in name; he is a painted false-tongued old man, with no religion but his love of the fine arts, and no care for anything but himself."

All this commentary, however, Miss Lamotte kept to herself.

"I wish you to accept Lord Beechfield," said the squire, "under pain of my displeasure."

"Give me three months to consider," implored Cathleen.

"I must first see whether the Earl of Beechfield is willing to be held off so long, and with uncertainty in the background," observed the squire, drily.

"But my dear grandpapa, you are not in his place," said Cathleen, with a dash of her natural sarcasm, "and I believe we shall find my lord more lenient than we think for."

"I will mention it to him in the morning," said Squire Lamotte "and if he consents to give you three months to make up your mind, nothing more shall be said to you now; at the same time understand me most distinctly, Miss Lamotte, that when the time expires, if you have not made your resolution, if you still hesitate, you leave Dungarvon for ever. I disown you."

There was something terribly emphatic in the voice, and in the gesture of the tall white-haired gentleman; he held out his right arm, it seemed raised as though to drive his beautiful granddaughter for ever from his presence.

Cathleen looked round upon the splendour of the room where she sat, she glanced at the paintings, marble statues, the silken hangings, the magnificent mirrors, and she felt that all this luxury and show, refinement and pomp were necessary to her happiness. She was a lady with a very fastidious taste, and with a natural love of ease and wealth. No, she must marry that odious, painted, padded old man at the end of the three months—dreary, dreary fate.

"Let me say good-night, now," she said, rising suddenly to her feet, and extending her hand to the squire, "good-night, grandpapa."

She walked slowly out of the room, paced the richly-carpeted corridor, and entered that wing of the mansion which led to her own apartments.

How lovely her sleeping-room looked, with its rose-coloured silk hangings, its bedstead of rosewood inlaid with mother of pearl, its brightly-welcoming fire, with the couch drawn close to it. Upon this couch the heiress threw herself; she beat the ground impatiently with her small foot.

"Tyranny," she said, aloud. "Tyranny."

At this moment, when her heart was bursting with rage and sorrow, no thought of a superstitious or nervous character was likely to find place in her heart; therefore, when she heard the sound of footsteps on the other side of her bed-room, she did not give the circumstance a thought beyond annoyance, at having, as she supposed, exposed her state of mind before her maid.

"I do not want you to-night, Fantine," she said; "you can go."

The steps continued, and then a low, unearthly laugh made the heiress of Dungarvon start to her feet in a paroxysm of terror. She rushed to the door, but it seemed to her in her nervous fright that the handle would not turn, at last she wrenched it open, and ran like one distraught along the passage; ran to where she saw a gentleman with one arm in a sling, holding a taper to a lamp in the passage with his free hand. It was Earnshaw, who, unable to sleep, had dressed himself, and had come out to walk about the passages in his unrest.

Cathleen rushed up to him, and clasped his shoulders with her hands.

"Help me," she gasped, "don't, don't leave me."

"What desperate coquetry! thought Earnshaw. She shall find me quite impervious to such attacks."

"Pray what has alarmed you, Miss Lamotte?" he inquired, and he moved away from the small, clinging white hands. "Shall I call your maid?"

Cathleen looked at his stern face in a wild amaze.

(To be continued.)

UTILISING YOUNG PEERS.—Mr. Gladstone is going to utilise the young peers. Lords Camperdown and Morley, Lords-in-Waiting, are to represent departments not represented in the Upper House, and as the *Daily News* cleverly puts it, to realise the poet's thought, "They also serve who only stand and wait."

Lord Lansdowne, too, being too rich to take small pay, is to be an unpaid Lord of the Treasury. It is very nice, all this, and not unwise, but what provision is to be made for apprenticing young Commons? The Peers have already twenty years "pull" upon the Commons, and this arrangement will give them twenty-five.

AN OLD TALE REVIVED.—Often has the story of the murder of the courier of Lyons been told, and it is doubtful if we have heard the last of it even now. As all the world knows, an innocent man named Lesurques was executed as an accomplice in the murder—his innocence being plainly proved

afterwards, by the confession of the real murderers. The unfortunate man who fell a victim to the law's mistake left three children, who finally devoted themselves to obtaining a vindication of their father's memory by having the conviction quashed. The last survivor of the family, a Madlle. Lesurques, now eighty years of age, has recently brought forward another appeal on the case in the Paris Court of Cassation, and again was the appeal rejected upon some merely technical point. At the daughter's advanced age it is hardly likely the public will hear much more of the subject, but the old lady will certainly persevere while life and strength last.

THE HEAD-HUNTERS OF CELEBES.—In the interior live a people called by the coast tribes Turaju, who are represented as head-hunters, and even cannibals. Barbosa makes a similar statement in regard to all the natives of this island in his time. He says, when they came to the Moluccas to trade, they were accustomed to ask the king of those islands to kindly deliver up to them the persons he had condemned to death, that they might gratify their palates on the bodies of such unfortunates, "as if asking for a hog." — *Travels in the East Indian Archipelago.*

STORY OF THE HEART.

CHAPTER I.

COMMANDER MARCUS WINNER's friends were somewhat surprised when he brought a young bride to his elegant new house in Chelsea. They understood then why he had resigned his commission and retired from service, though his energies were still unimpaired, and he was as capable of serving his country as ever. His record had been a brilliant one, and he ranked high among the list of naval officers who have done so much to shed lustre upon that branch of our country's service, both at home and abroad. The veteran of thirty years' experience had bid a final adieu to his favourite element, and settled down to pass the remainder of his days under the shadow of his own roof-tree, in peace and quiet. Perhaps he considered that he had well earned this privilege.

Having been a bachelor so long, his friends had come to the conclusion that he would never marry; and his relatives, looking with a speculative eye upon the future, used to calculate their share in the division of his extensive property. Consequently there was considerable surprise, and a great deal more of disappointment, when this supposed confirmed bachelor took unto himself a wife.

His choice, also, was considered such a singular one. Instead of marrying some ancient maiden who had long languished in the shade of neglect, or some buxom, well-to-do widow, he brought home a "chit of a girl," who had not yet seen her twentieth summer, and he was more than fifty. Few of the circumstances of this marriage transpired, as Marcus Winner was not very communicative, and the bluff manners he had acquired upon the quarter-deck held the impertinently curious at bay. It was only known that her maiden name was Crecentia Ennis, the daughter of an old comrade. Tolerably well educated, she had been left almost penniless by the untimely death of her father at sea. Marcus Winner had assumed her guardianship, and provided for her support. He had been rather liberal in that respect, having assumed the care of another ward, a youth named Selden Belmont—a wild young man, who had caused the worthy commander considerable trouble and anxiety. He had contrived to tame his exuberance by getting him a midshipman's berth in the navy, and as Belmont was as brave and reckless as he was thoughtless and unprincipled, he had managed to work up to a lieutenant's position, though he had narrowly escaped disgrace on several occasions, and the commander's influence alone saved him from the punishment he merited. These matters got bruited abroad through the exertions of the disgusted relatives, who considered themselves robbed of every penny devoted to the two wards. The commander's marriage capped the climax of their indignation, and Crecentia was looked upon as a scheming adventuress, who had entrapped a rich old man with her pretty face.

She was very pretty; even the most envious were forced to admit it; and disinterested parties wondered why one so rich in personal attractions should have wedded a man old enough to be her father. Surely, they thought, her face should have gained her a husband more suitable to her years. She looked like a queen presiding over her household, and she was singularly composed and at ease in her new station. She availed herself of her husband's liberality (his love was doting, and she might have spent his entire fortune in a month had she so willed it) to dress elegantly and in the most approved fashion—and her taste was exquisite. She was never proud, ce-

tentations, or extravagant, as many might have been in her place. She bore her honours meekly, and with an innate dignity that proclaimed the well-born lady. She was gracious to all, but when, as sometimes happened, some pretence of fashion attempted covertly, as people will do, to remind her that she was a nobody, a steely glance came into the gentle blue eyes, the shapely lips became compressed, the stately head crested, and the unspoken scorn, so well expressed without words, completely overwhelmed the unlucky sneerer with a full conviction of her own utter insignificance.

That Crecentia loved her husband, we are not prepared to say; the snows of December cannot warm to life the flowers of May; that she respected him, looked up to him, abided by his counsel, ministered to his lightest wish, and honoured him, few know or guessed how much, for the proud position in which he had placed her, was beyond doubt. The commander was satisfied; he was not disposed to be critical; the heyday of his youth was past, and he did not look for transports. He was proud of her—proud of her youth and beauty; proud of himself for having won this peerless creature, when time and service had seamed his face with many a wrinkle, and his once dark locks were turning gray. And yet, notwithstanding his long strife with the elements, time had dealt leniently with Marcus Winner. His tall form towered proudly erect, his step was firm and stately, his dark hazel eyes gleamed with the fire of youth, and his voice was loud and resonant. Walking together, they reminded you of the graceful ivy twining around the sturdy oak—he was so full of life and strength; she the very embodiment of gentleness and tenderness.

Crecentia had one peculiarity which her husband had often noticed. She was strangely absent at times, and if suddenly spoken to during these fits of abstraction, would start nervously, with a wild, frightened look in her eyes. Had the commander been of a jealous disposition, he might have thought that she was brooding over the memory of some lost early love; but his open, manly nature was above suspicion.

The commander came home one day from the post-office looking very much annoyed—a singular circumstance for him, as it was seldom that the equanimity of his temper was disturbed. Crecentia naturally inquired the cause.

"That graceless ward of mine is coming here," he answered, taking a letter from his pocket. "His ship has been ordered to the navy yard for repairs. That gives him leave of absence, and he writes me word that he intends to pay me a visit."

"I do not see anything very dreadful in that," Crecentia laughingly responded. "It is Selden Belmont, whom I have so often heard you speak of, is it not?"

"The same," answered Winner, a cloud gathering over his frank features.

"I have never met him," returned Crecentia. "Indeed, I was not aware that you had another ward, until recently."

"I know you have never met him," said Winner, "and I had some hopes you never would. He does not know that you were my ward. In short, my dear Crecentia, I have always entertained as poor an opinion of this young man, that I did not wish you to become acquainted with him."

"Is he really so dangerous?" asked Crecentia, still laughing. She could not comprehend the worthy commander's perplexity.

"He is utterly without principle," replied the commander. "Were he my son, I should have discarded him long ago; but his father was a brave and honourable man. We were shipmates for years, and when the malignant fever struck him down in a foreign port, I promised him, in his dying hour, to be a father to his boy, and rear him as my own. It was a sacred trust, and I have faithfully performed it. This Selden Belmont is an enigma. Brave, fearless and trusty at sea in the hours of danger, he has gained promotion rapidly, and won a reputation that any young man might well be proud of; but no sooner does he place his foot upon the land, than the very spirit of evil seems to possess him. His intrigues have been innumerable, and he has brought shame beneath many roof-trees. Two divorces have been brought about by his lawless passions. Nature has made this man dangerous to the susceptible heart of woman, by making him an Adonis in form and feature. His manners are those of a polished gentleman, and he has a tongue that I verily believe could wheedle Old Nick himself."

Crecentia became strangely thoughtful.

"How long has Belmont been absent?" she asked, anxiously.

"Three years. He has just returned from the African station."

Crecentia shuddered, and her cheeks paled perceptibly.

"Oh! if it should have been he?" she murmured. "What did you say?" asked Winner, who had imperfectly caught the words.

"I said, if he should be what you describe," returned Crecentia, with an effort, "it would perhaps be as well to decline his visit."

"Ah! you do not know Selden Belmont," answered Winner, shrugging his shoulders. "Were I to send him word not to come, that would bring him all the sooner. Don't you understand, my dear, he is coming here expressly to see you."

A look of wild alarm overspread Crecentia's fair face.

"To see me!" she gasped tremulously. "Why should he wish to see me?"

"The reason is very simple," returned Winner, grimly. "He has heard, doubtless, that I have a young and pretty wife, and he comes to gratify his curiosity by having a look at you. But what is the matter, my dear? You are quite pale and all of a tremble."

"I—I—do not feel very well to-day," she stammered. "I wish this man was not coming here," she added, involuntarily.

"So do I, with all my soul!" responded Winner, bluntly. "But there is no help for it. I have told you what this man is, to put you on your guard, for you will find him excellent company. He may seek to entangle you in a flirtation; but I hardly think he will venture to trifle with me."

The commander smiled grimly.

"Do you fear me?" asked Crecentia, archly.

"No, dearest, I trust you with my whole life and soul; but you are young and inexperienced, and do not understand how a man 'can smile and smile, and be a villain.'"

"Never doubt me," cried Crecentia, earnestly, "whatever circumstances may be brought against me. It is my pride to think that I am worthy to be the wife of so good a man. I would die sooner than wrong you in word, thought or deed!"

He kissed her fondly, and there the conversation ended.

In the privacy of her chamber Crecentia wrung her hands together, whilst a look of anguish convulsed her features.

"Oh!" she moaned, "if it should be—if it should be he, merciful heaven! what shall I do?"

The next day Selden Belmont arrived. The commander in his description had merely done him justice. Nature, in her gifts, had indeed been lavish to him. His form was the perfection of symmetry—tall and graceful. His eyes were black, and keen as a hawk's, his hair of the same hue, curled crisply all over his head, his nose aquiline, his mouth small, with shapely lips, and furnished with white teeth of faultless regularity. He wore a full beard, black and glossy. The African sun had given his face a dark olive tint. Altogether his face was not unlike that of some ancient warrior stamped upon a bronze medallion.

Crecentia was sitting in the parlour that looked seaward when Marcus Winner brought Selden Belmont in. She arose when she heard them coming, and her eyes had in them a look like that of a wild doe brought to bay by the hunters.

"This is my wife," said Winner, going through the formula of an introduction. "Crecentia, this is Mr. Selden Belmont."

She gave one glance at that handsome face; as she curtied she saw the mocking smile of recognition in the dark face she so well remembered, and, with a low moan, she sank fainting to the floor. Winner sprang forward in great alarm to assist her. Belmont aided him, and together, they placed her upon the sofa.

"A sudden faintness, I presume," said Belmont. "The heat, no doubt. It has been very sultry all day—scarcely a breath stirring. We poor wretches, fresh from the African station, don't mind such weather; but it is very trying to a delicate female."

He took a sagon of cologne from the centre-table and bathed her forehead with the fragrant contents, wiping her brows the while with his delicately-perfumed handkerchief.

Winner set his teeth firmly together as he saw Belmont ministering so daintily to his unconscious wife. Somehow the sight was not pleasant to him.

"I will ring for her maid," he said.

"No—don't!" exclaimed Belmont, negligently. "I will soon bring her to. I have had some experience in these matters."

"Yes; I have heard so," returned Winner, drily.

"I daresay," was the careless answer. "You know what the old song says:

In every land we find a port,
In every port, a house, sir."

He sang this refrain in a style that would have made the baritone of an opera troupe jealous with envy.

"And in every home," he continued, in the same

off-hand manner, "we find a sweetheart. Bless their dear souls! Every time I hear the cry of 'Land—oh!' after days spent on the blue water, I always say, 'Now we shall see the girls.'"

"You are a great admirer of the fair sex, Belmont?"

That free and easy gentleman was now assiduously fanning Crecenia with a satin fan she had dropped when she encountered her gaze.

"I believe you," he exclaimed. "What said William Cavendish, the ancient mariner—freebooter, the Spaniards of the Main called him? 'We poor sons of the sea know too well what it is to be deprived of the heaven of their society, to miss a single opportunity of claiming and obtaining it. The glorious sights of ocean, the flower-decked lands of other climes, all pass as nothing to the lonely tar, but were the girl he loved companion of his perils, the boundless waste around him would be peopled with sweet hopes, danger would seem a dream, toil would be pleasure, and the hard-won victory doubly proud and glorious, for her eye would thank him, and her smile would speak the share she bore in the bright fame he had achieved.'"

The old veteran's eye kindled, and his blood tingled in his veins, as these words flowed, like the rippling of a brook, from Belmont's lips. How vividly the past came back, and he lived his adventurous career over again. All the time Belmont was pouring forth this rhapsody, he was keenly watching Crecenia's face, and saw, what her husband failed to perceive, that her senses had returned, though her eyes had closed again after one appealing glance into the dark face above her, through the long eyelashes.

"What a pity you are such a scamp!" cried Winsor, in his usual blunt way. "Belmont, it will be your own fault if you do not live to be to be an admiral."

The young man shrugged his shoulders deprecatingly.

"Give a dog a bad name," he laughingly exclaimed. "But hush—your lady is reviving—don't ruin me in her estimation. See—the colour comes back to her cheek. She is out of danger, and I shall be proud to assure her—that she has nothing to fear." He laid a strong stress upon these words, and they sounded very thankfully to one of his listeners.

"Yes, I must confess I am devoted to the sex—

Thin or thick, fat, short or tall,

Black, brown, or white, I love them all!"

Crecenia sat up on the sofa, and laughed gaily. "Really, Mr Belmont," she exclaimed, "it appears to me that you are a general admirer."

"You are better?" cried Winsor, joyfully.

"Much," she answered. "It was very stupid in me; but I have been giddy all the morning. It was—"

"The heat, of course," interrupted Belmont, politely helping her to the word.

Again that strange light in those expressive eyes. Did it portend danger? She shivered, notwithstanding the heat.

"I presume so," she answered, confusedly.

"I remember you were not well yesterday," said Winsor. "She looked quite ill when I was speaking of your intended visit," he added, to Belmont.

A gleam of satisfaction flashed for a moment in the young man's eyes, as if he derived a pleasure from this intelligence. Then the conversation led into generalities. Selden Belmont was a fluent speaker, and possessed the power of entertaining to a wonderful degree. The many lands he had visited, and the adventurous life he had led, had stored his mind with innumerable anecdotes and scraps of information, with which he embellished his conversation in a sparkling manner and without effort. Listening delightedly to the rich cadence of his voice, Crecenia asked herself, "Can this man be a villain?" It seemed incredible; and yet Marcus Winsor was the last person in the world to malign any man's character without good and sufficient cause.

After a short time, Crecenia excused herself, on the plea of indisposition, and retired to her chamber. The trial through which she had passed had unnerved her, and she felt the necessity of some repose. Belmont gallantly escorted her to the door, whispering in her ear:

"I must have a private interview with you—when?"

"This afternoon—in the garden," she returned, glancing uneasily at her husband; but his back was turned, and he was looking seaward—the view from the window being very fine in that direction.

When Crecenia was gone, Belmont threw himself carelessly upon the sofa.

"By Jove, governor!" he exclaimed, "you are a lucky fellow."

Marcus Winsor turned round and smiled pleasantly. It was a source of great gratification to him to hear his young wife praised.

"Ah, you think the old sea-dog showed good taste in his selection; eh?" he replied, proudly. "She is pretty—is she not?"

"Pretty!" responded Belmont, enthusiastically. "bah! that is a gingerbread term, only to be applied to dolls and babies. Pretty does not convey the idea at all; she is beautiful! I have been in many lands, commodore," (Belmont had a way of calling his guardian governor and commodore indiscriminately), "and I have seen the beauties of every clime; the fair-haired woman, with her peachy complexion; the sparkling and piquant Parisienne; the dark-eyed daughters of Italy; the olive-skinned donnas of sunny Spain; the phlegmatic blondes of Germany; the swarthy brunettes of the Northland; the almond-eyed Chinese; and the supple-limbed maidens of the Pacific Isles; but never have I seen a woman so truly, purely beautiful as Crecenia!"

The commander was highly pleased at this eulogium upon his wife; and more from the fact that Belmont was not apt to be very flattering in his opinions concerning women. His creed was well-known. Women were to him "mere idle Cynthias for the minute," and when that time was past he straightway forgot them.

"But how does it happen, my dear commander," he continued, "that I find you a married man? Why, three years ago, when I sailed away, you had no thoughts of it. And how is it that you had a female ward all this time, and I did not know anything about it?"

"Simply because it was none of your business, Selden," answered Winsor, bluntly. "You were not the best companion in those days for a young female, whom I had long designed to make my wife. I sent her to a seminary in Worcester when she was ten years old, and kept her there until she was nineteen. I educated her with the idea that she was to become my wife; kept it constantly before her, so that she grew up prepared to accept me as her destiny. It was a strange fancy, I confess; but the thought cheered many a lonely hour on the ocean, and made my return to land more pleasant. I visited my 'little wife,' as I called her, upon every occasion, and became so interested in her progress and ripening intelligence and beauty—until I fairly fell in love with her, more like a boy of twenty than a seasoned man of fifty. I proposed, and was accepted. So you see my little scheme came to a successful termination."

"Ah! my dear governor, you ran a great risk," exclaimed Belmont, nonchalantly. "Supposing some handsome young gentleman had come along, whose whiskers were not quite so gray as yours, and made an impression upon your intended wife's heart—school-girls are apt to be susceptible, you know—and then when you made your proposal, she had told you she loved some one else, what would you have done?"

"Given her to the man she loved," said Winsor, promptly, "and with her a daughter's dowry."

"You're a brick, governor!" cried Belmont, with admiration. "If I had only known that," he added, reflectively, "I might—"

He paused suddenly, as he saw the surprised look upon Marcus Winsor's face.

"Might what?" he demanded, quickly.

"Have taken unto myself a wife before now," exclaimed Belmont, laughingly, "and trusted to your generosity for a son's portion."

"You should have had it, Selden," returned the worthy commander.

He leaned over the young man as he reclined carelessly upon the sofa, and placed his hand affectionately upon his shoulder.

"Selden," he continued, "it is my firm belief, and always has been, that your marriage with a good and respectable girl would prove your salvation. I am charitable enough to ascribe your irregularities of conduct—I use a mild term—to the folly of youth; but is it not about time to cast this folly from you? You are now twenty-five years of age, holding an honourable station in your country's service. You are brave, talented, accomplished, with every requisite to make a brilliant future. Be a man. Select some good girl—no matter what her station may be in life—marry her, and on your wedding-day I will make you a present of ten thousand pounds."

Selden Belmont repressed a slight yawn.

"I will think about it," he answered, indifferently.

"Heartless—utterly heartless!" murmured Marcus Winsor, as he turned away with a sigh.

Belmont's keen eyes observed the old man's emotion, and his handsome upper lip curled contemptuously.

"Marriage is such a ticklish business, you know, governor," continued Belmont, lazily, "it's like fishing—you never know what bites until you have hooked your prey. And even when you have them on the hook you are not sure of them. You know what Othello says: 'Oh! that we can call these

delicate creatures ours, and not their appetites.' Suppose now—excuse me if I verge on the impertinent—that your peerless Crecenia should one day discover that she did not love you, that she mistook gratitude for a stronger passion, and should meet with her affinity, and quietly slip away some dark night—wives have done that sort of thing before now—what would you do, governor?"

Marcus Winsor's stout form quivered like the sturdy oak beneath the breath of a strong gale, and he turned upon the young man with blazing eyes.

"Enough of that, Selden Belmont," he cried, and his strong voice trembled. "My wife is something too sacred in my eyes to be made the subject of such idle words. I do not profess to have the same knowledge of the sex that you have—my experience has been entirely with the good and pure; but I profess to know something of human nature. I am not a fool; I know the disparity of our ages, and I do not look for that fervency of affection that Crecenia might bestow upon a younger man, one nearer her own age; I am satisfied with the respect—gratitude, if you will—that she must feel for me. I trust the soul that looks out of her eyes—I trust it utterly, and I feel that my honour is safe in her charge. If she ever swerves from the strict path of duty, it will be through the machinations of some designing villain, who might mislead her innocence; but it would cost him dear."

"How so?" asked Belmont, who appeared to be probing the mind of his protector to the very heart.

"I would shoot him!" exclaimed Winsor, fiercely.

"Shoot him, as I would a venomous reptile! and I would forgive her. Belmont, as you value my friendship, never introduce this subject again. Remember that Crecenia is my wife, and guard your conduct towards her."

Marcus Winsor strode from the apartment. He was ruffled beyond measure, and he was annoyed at himself for having been forced out of his usual equanimity.

(To be concluded.)

ROYAL FORESTS AND WOODLANDS.

THE receipts from the New Forest, by sales of produce, rents, licences to sport, &c., in the year ending 31st of March, 1868, amounted to 17,546*l.*, and the expenditure, maintenance, management, planting, &c. amounted to 13,285*l.*, leaving the net income 4,261*l.* The receipts from Dean Forest amounted to 11,038*l.*, the expenditure was 6,294*l.*, leaving the net receipt 4,744*l.* From Highmowood Woods, Gloucester, the receipt was 1,576*l.*; but the expenditure was 1,700*l.*, though only 108*l.* of it was for planting, the result was a deficiency of 824*l.* The receipt from Alice Holt Woods, Hants, was 4,246*l.*, and the expenditure being 1,560*l.*, left a surplus of 2,686*l.* The Woolmer Estate, Hants, produced 745*l.*; the expenditure was 98*l.*, and the net income 647*l.* From Bere Woods, Hants, the receipt was 1,981*l.*, the expenditure being 897*l.*; net receipt, 1,084*l.* Parkhurst Woods, receipt, 368*l.*; expenditure, 336*l.*; net receipt, 27*l.* Hasleborough Wood, Northampton, receipts, 490*l.*; expenditure, 269*l.*; net receipt, 221*l.* Salcey Wood, Northampton, receipt, 1,659*l.*; expenditure, 818*l.*; net receipt, 841*l.* Delamere Woods, Chester, receipts, 5,641*l.*; expenditure, 2,328*l.*; net receipt, 3,313*l.* Sums amounting to 1,090*l.* were allowed to tenants on this last estate for losses by the cattle plague. Chopwell Woods, Durham, produced only 25*l.*, and the expenditure being 414*l.*, there was a deficiency of 389*l.* The result shows, for the 11 woods and forests, a net receipt of only 17,111*l.* on the year. Windsor parks and woods are maintained for other objects than pecuniary profit; the receipts from sales of produce, rents, venison fees, &c., amounted to 7,199*l.*, and the expenditure was 21,123*l.*—viz., nearly 13,000*l.*, in maintenance and general management, 4,000*l.* in salaries, above 2,000*l.* in preparation of produce for sale, and upwards of 2,000*l.* on buildings, fences, &c.

ROSSINI.—Rossini's large fortune, it is said, is left to his widow during her lifetime; after her death, it is to revert to his birthplace, Pesaro, for the purpose of founding a music-school there. But he has honourably remembered his deathplace, Paris, by leaving to the Institut capital necessary to provide two annual prizes of 8,000 francs each: one for the best opera-book, one for the best score to the same; only it is expressly stipulated that the composer shall be a melodist. Such a protest against the trashy transcendentalism of our time as this bequest is worth its weight in double the gold of the yearly income.

DEATH OF ABRAHAM COOPER.—The death is announced of Abraham Cooper, honorary retired R.A. He was born in a humble condition of life in Red Lion-street, Holborn, in September, 1787. He was

elected an associate of the Royal Academy in 1817, and full academicien in 1820. In early life he passed much of his time among horses, and to this circumstance must be ascribed the direction which his artistic talent has taken. His first picture was the portrait of a favourite old horse belonging to the late Sir Henry Moux, Bart., who recommended the young artist to study art, and became his kind friend and liberal patron. The only studio frequented by him was the stable or the grass field, and the only books he consulted were some old numbers of the *Sporting Magazine*, illustrated with portraits of horses drawn by Marshall, a well-known animal painter of that time. His first exhibited picture, "Tam O'Shanter," sent to the British Institution in 1814, was bought by the then Duke of Marlborough. Mr. Cooper has been a constant exhibitor both at the Royal Academy and at the British Institution. He was the chief "bathe-painter" of the English school, and among his principal pictures may be mentioned "Blucher at the Battle of Ligny," "Cromwell at Marston Moor," "Lord Arundel capturing a Turkish Standard," "Lord Arthur Capel defending Colchester during the Civil War," "The Battle of Shrewsbury," "Sir William Russell at the Battle of Zutphen," "The Death of Harold," "Richard I. and Saladin at Ascalon," "The Battle of Assaye," and "The Battle of Waterloo." Several of these pictures have been engraved. Mr. Cooper died at Greenwich on Christmas Eve at the advanced age of eighty-one years and three months.

FACETIÆ.

An irritable man having been disappointed in his boots, threatened to chew up the shoemaker, but compromised by drinking a cobble.

CHOOSING A PROFESSION.—"What profession would you like?" said a friend to a boy who was learning Latin. "Please, sir, when I am a man, I should like to be a sportsman."

NOVEL MARRIAGE ANNOUNCEMENT.—The *Quebec Morning Chronicle* of November 7 completes one of its marriage announcements with the following information:—"No cards! No cake! No wine!!!"

"How came you to have a wooden leg?" said a credulous man to a wag who had a wooden leg. "Why," answered the wag, "my father had one, and so had my grandfather. It runs in the blood."

RIDICULE THE TEST OF FASHION.

Dress-Maker: "I think the Fanniers will not be worn this winter; they have caused so much ridicule by the Grecian Bend."

Mrs. Bouton: "On the contrary, the more they are ridiculed, the more they will be worn! You know it was so with the large waterfalls. The more the hue-and-cry against them, the larger they became. If a fashion is not attacked by those horrid newspapers, it is because it is too insignificant—and amounts to nothing. I want the largest Fannier you can make!"

A SINGULAR wager was recently made in Indiana between a lady and a gentleman. If Grant was elected, the young man was to marry the young lady; if Seymour, the young lady was to marry the young gentleman.

"WHAT a traveller you have become!" exclaimed a Brightonian, on meeting an acquaintance at Constantinople. "To tell you the truth," was the frank reply, "I am obliged to run about the world to keep ahead of my character; for the moment it overtakes me I am ruined."

THE SCHOOL-GIRL ONCE MORE.—"Mary, do you say your prayers morning and evening?" "No, miss, I don't." "Why, Mary, are you not afraid to go to sleep in the dark without asking heaven to take care of you and watch over you until the morning?" "No, miss, I ain't afraid, 'cause I sleep in the middle."

A THIRSTY Quaker, having stopped at a tavern to get a glass of beer, observing that the measure was deficient, asked the landlord how many casks he drew in a day. "Ten." "And wouldst thou not like to draw eleven, my friend?" "Yes." "Then I'll tell thee how: fill—thy—measures!"

THE METHODIST PREACHER'S BET OF HALF-A-CROWN.—I have heard told of an illiterate but clever Methodist preacher, who was a collier of the district in Somerset where I held a curacy for seven years. He gave out for a text—"I can do all things." He then paused, and looking at the Bible keenly, said in his own native Somersetshire dialect: "What's that thee says, Paul—I can do all things? I'll bet thee half-a-crown o' that." So he took half-a-crown out of his pocket, and put it on the book. "However," he added, "let's see what the Apostle has to say for himself." So he read on the next

words, "through Christ that strengtheneth me." "Oh!" says he, "if that's the terms of the bet, I'm off," and he put the half-crown into his pocket again, and preached his sermon on the power of Christian grace.—*From Dean Ramsey's "Pulpit Table-Talk."*

A LOCAL paper says that at the North Wilts election, a voter who resides in a small country town not far from Corsham was applied to several times for his vote. This, however, he resolutely refused to give.—"For," said he, "directly after I voted last time the bread rose! and I made up my mind from that time that I'd never vote any more."

AN AGED DECEIVER.

Harriet Beale, aged twenty-three, was summoned to the Marylebone Police-court for threatening to harm her husband because he remonstrated on an overcharge in the bread bill.

Mr. D'Eyncourt: "What made her so violent?" Complainant: "Because I wanted to know about the overcharge. I have to complain of a series of ill-usage and violence on many occasions, and she has called me most filthy names."

Defendant: "He has driven me to this; and unless I get the protection of this court I am not in safety. He has gone to Quebec-street, where he is living with a lady."

Mr. D'Eyncourt: "Have you given the defendant any cause for jealousy?"

Complainant: "Not the least, sir. Why, bless your heart, I am as true to her as the dial is to the sun."

A witness was called, who said complainant told her that he loved a young woman in a nobleman's family.

In reply to the charge, defendant said: "The baker did not charge for more bread than had been taken in. That old man (pointing to her husband) is a very great bread-eater. The old deceiver has got a son forty-three years old. The deceitful old man, when he was courting me, said he was only fifty years of age, and I now find that he is over seventy. He has most cruelly deceived me. Then, as regards his teeth, they are false. He goes to bed drunk at night, and when he gets up in the morning he often cannot find them. He dyes his hair as well. He has deceived me in my young days." (Laughter.)

Mr. D'Eyncourt (to complainant): "Did you deceive her as regards your age?"

Complainant: "Yes, I did."

Defendant: "He has a large family of children, and I did not know it. He is an atheist, and laughs at the Bible, and wants to burn mine. He has most grossly deceived me; what with his false teeth, and hair-dye, and colouring his face, he would take in anyone." (Loud laughter.)

Mr. D'Eyncourt: "This is not a divorce court for me to go into extraneous matter."

Complainant: "She hides my teeth, and takes away my hair-dye."

Defendant: "I cannot be happy with a man seventy years of age. He so makes himself that no one knows him. I can assure you that I never touched his teeth, and I am confident that I never removed his hair-dye." (Laughter.)

Mr. D'Eyncourt told her to go away and get some friend to interpose between them.

A MISTAKE.—"Vat's de matter, vat's de matter?" exclaimed an old Dutch friend of ours, as he tucked up his apron and ran out of his shop to know the meaning of a crowd in his neighbourhood. "Nat's de matter?" "There's a man killed," replied a bystander. "Oh, ish dat all?" said our friend, evidently disappointed; "ish dat all? shoot a man killed? humph, I tho't it was a fight."

A PAROCHIAL VISIT.

In a country parish in Scotland, the minister and the ruling elder went over the muir to visit an old parishioner on a "catechising" visit, and the walk being a long one, their appetites were pretty keen when they arrived. Before commencing the serious business, they suggested that the "inward man" was clamorous.

Janet accordingly went to the "press," and placed on the table country refreshments, bread, milk, &c., and seating herself at a little distance, requested her visitors to fall to. They soon cleared the board, and the minister remarked:

"Now, Janet, we begin the serious business. Do you remember the text last Sunday, Janet?"

"Deed do I," replied Janet, "I mind it weel; it was the miracle of the loaves and the fishes!"

"And have ye pondered the subject during the week, Janet?"

"Deed I have; an' I'm thinkin' the noo, that gin you and the elder had been there, they wadna be's ta'en up see many baskets fu'."

A CANNY SCOT.—At the Brechin polling booths a respectable-looking voter, evidently one of the newly-enfranchised classes, and knowing nothing of

election formalities, advanced to the Sheriff's table, when the following colloquy ensued:—Sheriff: Do you wish to vote? Voter: Yes. Sheriff: What is your name? Voter: What's yours? Sheriff (after having got his name): Who do you vote for? Voter (placing his arms akimbo on the table, and with a knowing and familiar smile): Wha' are ye for yerself?

SELLING A HUSBAND.

At the Borough Police-court, a few days ago, Abraham Wolfe summoned a German woman, named Henrietta Kotha, the keeper of a public-house in Pitt-street, for having assaulted him. When the complainant had stated his case,

Defendant: "Vat you say is not all true. Ven did I first make use of your name, sare?"

Complainant: "Vhy, you said to somebody, 'If you want a husband go to Mr. Wolfe.'" (Loud laughter.)

Mr. Lamport, one of the magistrates: "What did she mean?"

Complainant: "Vhy, she bought a husband from me for ten pounds, and he is in court now." (Laughter.)

Defendant (with German enthusiasm and demonstration: "Mercks! mercks! mercks!" (Loud laughter.)

Complainant (with assurance): "I've got a receipt for the money." (Renewed laughter.)

Mr. Anderson (clerk to the magistrates): "Where is the receipt?"

Complainant: "Oh, I've got it at home."

Defendant (shrugging her shoulders): "Mercks! mercks!" (Laughter.)

Complainant: "It was a wedding, sare—and she saw the man, and she says to me, 'I will give you ten pounds for that man.'"

Defendant (with still greater demonstration): "Mercks! mercks! mercks!" (Great laughter.)

After hearing the evidence the magistrates dismissed the case.

Two young misses, discussing the qualities of some young gentlemen, were overheard thus: "Well, I like Charley, but he is a little childish; he hasn't got the least bit of a beard." "I say Charley has got a beard, but he shaves it off." "No, he hasn't, either, any more than I have." "I say he has, too, and I know it for it pricked my cheek."

In Scotland, recently, a woman went to register the birth of her child, and had to answer the usual questions. To the one: "Were you present at the birth?" the astonished woman answered, "I'm the mither of the bairn." "But that is not an answer to my question," replied the registrar. "Were you present at the birth?" "Yes, of course," she said, "I was there."

A WEATHER PROPHECY.

A Buffalo paper states that a spider in that city, just before the late "cold snap," was seen to spin a web in the form of the capital letters W I N T E R.

We have heard before of the spider as a natural prophet of weather, but never as putting its vaticinations in so legible a shape. Buffalo may well claim the champion spider.

A BOY on board one of the Gulf of Mexico steamers got up quite a panic among the passengers recently. He bolted suddenly into the cabin one morning, before the passengers had fairly rubbed their eyes open, exclaiming: "We are lost!" "Lost!" exclaimed another. "Lost!" screamed out the whole crew. "Yes, lost!" said the lad, astonished at the alarm he had created. "I know we ar' lost, because the captain's on top of the house, and another man's upon the mast looking to see whar we ar'!"

GOOD ADVICE.—A bachelor uncle, to whom his niece applied for advice on the question of choosing between suitors, one of whom was rich and the other poor—the latter, of course, being the most ardent as well as the favourite lover—sententiously replied:—"My dear, the question being stripped of all illusory elements, your choice simply lies between love and beef. Now love is an idea, and beef is a reality. Love you can get along without, and beef you must have. Therefore make sure of your beef."

A BELGIAN paper gives some singular details of a recent storm. Here is a literal translation:—"Sunday's storm was distinguished by some singular phenomena. The wind carried off several articles of the first necessity. For instance, the roof of a house and a lawyer's wife have totally disappeared. It is possible that the roof may have been found, but as for the lady, who was a light weight, her husband has given up all hopes of her recovery."

A LAUGHABLE incident occurred a few nights ago at a ball at which the elite only were present. Among others, Meto Kingi, one of the Maori representatives, a savage who can't speak English, and who, to make himself bearable, should use unlimited quantities of Eau de Cologne, was present. He "moved" about, scarcely speaking, but at last, seeing a lady with

very fine arms, which were bare a little above the elbow, he went up to her, and pointing to her arm, said "Kai-pai, kai-pai, fat," (good, good, fat,) at the same time smacking his lips longingly.—*New Zealand paper.*

"PAPA," said a bright-eyed little girl one day, "I believe mamma loves you better'n she does me." Papa held double on that subject, but considered that it was not best to deny the soft impeachment. She meditated thoughtfully about it for some time, evidently construing her father's silence as unfavourable to her side. "Well," said she at last, "I s'pose it's all right; you're the biggest, and it takes more to love you."

THE BLACKSMITH AND DANDY.—An industrious blacksmith and an idle dandy courted a pretty girl, who hesitated which of them to take. Finally she said she would marry whichever of them could show the whitest hands. With a sneer at the blacksmith the dandy held out his palms, white from idleness. The poor blacksmith hid his brawny hands in his pockets, then drawing them forth full of bright silver coins, he spread them over his dusky fingers. The girl decided that his fingers were the whitest.

NOT A MERCENARY NEPHEW.

"Good morning, uncle. How do you do?"
"I am well, as you see."
"I'll bet five pounds you don't know what I've come to see you for."
"Money, of course; you never come for anything but that."
"You've lost five pounds, my dear uncle! I came to ask you—how is aunt?"

Boggs likes a warm bed. One morning an agent for a patent fire-extinguisher tried to sell him a recipe. "Look here," said Boggs, "if you've got anything that'll save me from getting out of bed in the cold every morning, to light a fire for my wife to get breakfast by, I'll buy it; but don't come around here trying to sell stuff to put 'em out, it's too much trouble to start 'em."

ONE OF THE MISERIES OF LONDON.

MR. PUNCH'S COMPLIMENTS of the season to the First Commissioner of Works, and hopes that he will do something to make the streets of this Dirty-pole a little more passable; that, as a new broom, he will sweep clean. Some people have to walk.—*Punch.*

MASTER OF THE SITUATION?

SCENE.—Mr. Tethershot's Sanctum. Enter Mrs. T. and her Cook.

Cook (with her usual promptitude—she never kept anybody waiting): "Oh, if you please, sir, I wish to complain of Missis! which she come a dictatrin' and a hinterferin' in your kitchen in a way as I'm sure you wouldn't approve on, &c., &c., &c." "I

T. confesses he felt (for the first and last time) a delicious sensation of being apparently master in his own house. She was an admirable Cook, and altogether a most excellent—but however she had to go!—*Punch.*

A SPIRIT-MATTER.—In Kansas, a wife may prosecute a publican for selling spirits to her husband against her order. There will be no emigration to Kansas by Englishmen, we may safely affirm; but if Kansas law could emigrate over here, it would do us a great deal of good.—*Quia.*

THE GIRLS OF THE PERIOD.

Clara: "Bella, dear, what do you think of young Sniggins, the fellow I have just been dancing with?"

Bella: "Well, to tell the truth, love, I think he's the most awfully stupid-looking creature I ever saw."

Clara: "Well! he'll have six hundred when his father dies, and he's in dreadful health."

Bella: "What of that? Well, now I come to notice him, he really does seem interesting; introduce me, my dear—and, really—what lovely eyes he has!"—*Quia.*

A SKILL.

Furious Old Boy:—"You're an impertinent fellow! I'll take your number, sir!"

Cobby:—"No, yer won't—don't get a-frivittin' o' yourself!"

F. O. B.:—"Not take your number?—but I say I will, sir!"

Cobby, (pleasantly):—"No, yer won't. I means to keep it myself—but ye may copy it if ye like!"—*Fun.*

THE EASTERN QUESTION.—Our cook says that nobody need be surprised at the threatened war in the East, for at this time of the year nothing is more common than for Turkey to find itself in a broil with Grease.—*Fun.*

THE PROPOSED SEVERANCE OF THE SIAMESE TWINS.—Chang and Eng, otherwise known as the Siamese Twins, waited on Professor Syme at the Edinburgh

University for the purpose of asking his advice as to the propriety of severing the inter-communicating band by which they have been so long held together. After a careful examination, Professor Syme was strongly of opinion that such an operation would prove highly dangerous to their lives, and accordingly advised that the operation should not be performed. Sir James Y. Simpson, Bart., also entertains the same view.

ERECTION OF PROTESTANT CHURCHES IN SPAIN.

—The first Protestant church on Spanish soil has lately been opened at Mahon, in the island of Minorca. Stimulated by this good example, the municipality of Barcelona sent, of its own accord, a request to the Protestant inhabitants of the city inviting them to petition for permission to found a church of their own. The Protestant community of Barcelona is not inconsiderable. Apart from the English residents, there are some 700 German-speaking people.

THE ENTHRONISATION OF THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.—Dr. Tait, the new Archbishop, was enthroned in Canterbury Cathedral on January 28. The ceremony is of ancient origin, but previously to 1843 it had been in abeyance for a considerable period. Archbishop Wake was the last prelate who before Dr. Sumner's time was personally enthroned; it being the custom during the long period alluded to for the Dean to act as proxy. The chair to which the Archbishop is conducted is that presented by King Ethelbert to St. Augustine, and is historically almost as interesting an object as the chair of the Confessor in Westminster Abbey.

THE WOODMAN.

By some mischance a woodman broke
His axe's helve, though made of oak;
So to a Forest deep he goes,
(One that had never felt his blows)
And humbly begged that she would lend
A bit of wood his axe to mend.
He didn't wish—not he! to touch
A root or trunk—that were too much;
The smallest branch—a single limb,
The woodman said, would do for him:
And in return (twere only fair)
The friendly Forest he would spare,
And leave her oaks and pines to stand
The pride and glory of the land!
The gift was granted; but the wood
(Alas! for man's ingratitude!)
No sooner helped his axe to mend,
Than—lo!—she felt its weight descend
Upon her children, large and small,
From tiny twig to cedar tall!
Not one escaped his axe's aim!
Of all the woodman cared to claim!

MORAL.

This fable very plainly shows
It is not wise to aid your foes;
For gratitude's the rarest virtue
In one whose interest is to hurt you!

J. G. S.

THE KIRKEN PRIZE-MONEY.—This everlasting affair is not settled yet. Lord Palmerston agreed that it should be settled by an award of the Court of Admiralty (Dr. Lushington). Most of the money was paid, but among the prize was 200,000*l.* in Company's paper. The India House keeps this, under an idea that the Company's debts cannot be made Company's soldiers' prize. The objection is very shabby.

THE PEERAGE.—Notwithstanding Mr. Disraeli's generosity in conferring titles of nobility upon his friends, the roll of the Lords, so far as regards numbers, remains much the same as it was twelve months ago. During the year eight Peerages were created, but in the same period there were six extinctions. The Earldom of Cardigan has been merged with the Marquisate of Ailesbury, while the Marquisate of Hastings and the Baronies of Belhaven, Cranworth, Dunfermline, and Wensleydale, have become extinct.

AN ANCIENT FAMILY.—The death is announced of Dame Susanna, widow of Sir Charles Warren Malet, in the 91st year of her age. The founder of the family was a companion of William the Conqueror, and connected by marriage with Rollo, first Duke of Normandy. The fourth in descent was one of the barons, signatories of Magna Charta. The families of West, Earls de la Warre, and Seymours, Duke of Somerset, are descended from the Malets. Sir Thomas Malet was Chief Justice of the Common Pleas under Charles I. The present baronet is the fifth generation from Sir Thomas, and the twenty-third in direct descent from William, the founder of the family.

CALIFORNIAN CONIFERS.—Some time since, Mr. J. Q. A. Warren, of California, arrived in England with a magnificent collection of Pine Cones. They

have been exhibited at his private rooms, where we had the pleasure of inspecting them. We are glad to learn these Californian Conifers have been secured by Mr. Bennett, of the British Museum, for the Botanical department. The collection comprises fourteen species—viz., *Pinus Coulteri* (twin cones, with the young cone of the first year's growth), also a specimen of the same variety, over a foot and a half long, and an open cone, very large and beautiful, showing this species in all its perfection: *Pinus Sabina*: *Pinus Muricata*. This specimen was nearly three feet long, with seven distinct rows of cones, comprising over fifty perfect specimens on one branch; *Pinus insignis*, also very fine specimen, with cluster, containing twelve large and perfect seed-bearing cones. *Pinus Tuberculata*, *Pinus Jeffreyi*, *Pinus Contorta*, *Pinus Benthamiana*, *Pinus Tamra*, *Cupressus Macrocarpa*, and *Gomphrena Sequoia Gigantea*, *Pinus Torreyana*; and last, but not least, *Picea Bracteata*, the most rare and beautiful of all the Coniferæ family. Mr. Warren's collection is the most complete and the finest yet brought to England, and we may well congratulate Mr. Bennett on the purchase of it for our National Museum.

STATISTICS.

RAILWAY FACTS.—The number of miles travelled by railway trains in the United Kingdom in the year 1867 was 148,542,827. Upon an average, therefore, 44 miles were covered by trains in every second of time.

Of the total number of emigrants in 1868 there were 119,678 passengers under the Act, and 9,684 in "short" ships, being an increase of 14,828 in the former class, and a decrease of 1,167 in the latter. Of the emigrants in Government ships, whose nationalities are classed, 43,289 were English, 3,585 Scotch, 24,543 Irish, and 43,256 foreigners, principally Germans. Of the total number, 102,323 were for the United States, 15,409 for Canada, 1,601 for Victoria, and 340 for South America. In 1867, of 97,085 passengers under the Act there were 33,224 English, 23,327 Scotch, 83,786 Irish, and 25,748 other countries.

MISCELLANEOUS.

On the 23rd December a specimen of that rare bird, a black-throated thrush, was shot near Lewes.

A good female agricultural servant can get 25*l.* a-year in Brazil, and run the risk of being shot.

A MAN and woman were sentenced, the former to thirty days' and the latter to fourteen days' imprisonment, at Dunfermline, for being married under false names.

THE deliveries of tea in London, estimated for the week ending Dec. 21, 1868, were 1,333,429 lb., which is a decrease of 128,453 lb., compared with the previous statement.

MR. JOHNSON has pardoned Mr. Jefferson Davis, Mr. Benjamin, and all the other as yet unpardoned offenders of the rebellion,—partly, no doubt, to annoy Congress,—but, from whatever motive, not unwisely.

BRIBERY.—Seventy-seven Conservatives and 112 Liberals were assessed for bribery between 1862 and 1868. The petitions presented in connection with the recent elections affect the seats of 46 Conservatives and 58 Liberals.

THE subscription towards the testimonial proposed to be presented to General Peel, on his retirement from political life, now amounts to about 900*l.* The testimonial is expected to be presented to the gallant general at a public dinner at Huntingdon, but the date has not yet been fixed.

A PENSIONER named John Wright died recently at Mallow, at the fine old age of 90 years. He was forty-four years in the receipt of a pension of 1*l.* 10*d.* a day. He belonged to the gallant 79th Regiment (Cameron Highlanders), and was present in twenty-eight engagements; and on his discharge, in 1824, he was authorised to wear two silver medals.

THE French journals are pointing out that the Emperor Napoleon's four great enemies are exactly the same age as himself—sixty. They are Baron Buns, Ledru-Rollin, Garibaldi, and Mazzini. Other Continental public men are very old: Guizot, seventy-eight; Lamartine, seventy-one; Pius IX. and Espartero, seventy-six; and Thiers, seventy-two.

SIR CULLING EARDLY, BART., who, in January 1868, was sentenced to a term of imprisonment for bigamy, has been pardoned by the Crown, in consequence of the representations made to the late Home Secretary as to the state of Sir Culling's health. It is stipulated, however, that he shall absent himself from this country until the term of imprisonment to which he was sentenced has expired.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

H. J.—See our answer to "Paper-Mills."
CLAUDE LAPINIERE—Handwriting very good.
Mrs. COULSON.—1. Old Broad-street, City, E.C. 2. Highgate.

JOHN WRIGHT.—Without doubt, notwithstanding the death, you are still brother-in-law.

ASPA.—No. The Conservatives were in power at the time you mention.

M. FITZGERALD.—We do not publish the book. Apply to a bookseller.

W. FITZ-HOWARD.—We make no charge for insertions of communications in the columns of THE LONDON READER.

G. V.—Without doubt the son has a claim to the share which his father would have been entitled to, had he lived.

JANE WILSON.—Your better plan would be to purchase a new plank. Your only other course is to fill up the cracks with plaster-of-Paris.

J. W. D.—The intestate leaving no issue or widow, the property would go to the brother, and in default of the latter, to his next representative.

LECY.—It means land held by the annual payment to the lord of the manor of a peppercorn. It is an old feudal custom.

M. A. JONES.—We cannot answer your question without knowing the terms of the will. Your husband being alive, why not ask him?

HENRY.—Jacobus is a gold coin of the value of twenty-five shillings, so called from King James I. of England, in whose reign it was struck.

EX-REPORTER.—There is no doubt that an influential M.P., voting with the Government, can help you to a nomination for the Civil Service.

J. J.—Any bookseller will supply you with the book. It is entitled, "A Guide to the Civil Service; published by Warr and Co. The price is either 2s. 6d. or 3s. 6d."

ELPHINSTONE.—Apply to a respectable solicitor, make a bargain with him as regards his costs, which should not be more than 5s., and ask him to sue for you in *forma pauperis*.

ROSS CLARK.—The first marriage is legal. Another marriage, the first husband being alive, would be an act of bigamy, and render the wife punishable according to law.

LOTHIAN.—1. The letters signify "Doctor of Civil Law." 2. You may purchase a bagatelle board of any toy-seller from 1s. upwards; the price depending upon size and quality.

WILLIAM JONES.—You cannot act without consulting a solicitor. Take our advice, be wary; the law is sharp and shrewd with reference to goods being made over with fraudulent intent.

GULPIN.—Lord Howe's victory, styled "the glorious first of June," was in 1794. In 1867, only three officers remained to commemorate the event, Admirals Batsy, Davis, and Barrett.

BREWARD.—*Jacquerie* is a term applied to bands of revolted peasants, first given to a body of them headed by Callet, called Jacques Bonhomme, which ravaged France during the captivity of King John in 1358.

L. PUDLY.—Any courier or leather-dresser will supply you with the material, or, by favour, a cricket ball maker. 2. The most durable and hardest of all leathers is, perhaps, pigskin, but much depends upon the tanning.

GUMMA.—Having met with the accident you name, how foolish of you to have kept the knowledge of it from your mother. If you do not at once consult a surgeon the effects may indeed be dangerous.

WILLIAM GRIFFITHS asks us if he can use his grandmother's crest? Certainly not, and for the simple reason, that no woman has a right to bear a crest. 2. Doctors' Commons, London.

D. H.—You should advertise in the daily newspapers. We do not admit advertisements in the columns of THE LONDON READER. In the first column of the Times you will continually see similar advertisements.

SAMUEL DORSET.—1. You may make the experiment as a matter of curiosity or discovery. To distil for profit without a license is punishable under the excise laws. 2. We know nothing of the spirit you mention.

ONE IN TROUBLE.—If the engagement be broken between you, you certainly are right in demanding the return of your letters, and your late admirer must be a very shabby fellow to refuse you. At the same time you have no remedy.

FOXINA.—1. Whigs and Tories.—Numerous authors trace the origin of these designations to various occasions and epochs. Baker, one of them, and probably the most reliable, says: "This distinction of parties arose out of the discovery of the Mead-tub Plot in 1678. Upon bringing up the Mead-tub Plot before parliament, two parties were formed;

the one, who called the truth of the whole story in question; and this party styled those who believed in the plot "Whigs." The other party, crediting the truth of the plot, styled their adversaries "Tories." But in time these names, given upon this occasion as marks of opprobrium, became distinctions much boasted of by the parties bearing them. 2. Steele was simply a pen name given to George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, by the silly and pedantic King James II. 3. The name of Pope Pius IX., before he arrived to the Papal chair, was Giovanni Maria Mastai Ferretti. He was elected in June, 1846; he was born in 1793. 4. Handwriting good and rather ladylike.

JOHN McGRATH.—1. There are many Irishmen in the French service. 2. The passage money from France to Algeria is not of large amount, but the precise sum you can only ascertain at the particular point, or port, from which you wish to start.

SAINT MUNDO.—Address a letter, enclosing particulars in detail, to the right honourable the Secretary at War. We fear, however, you will have but small chance of a hearing, if your letter be not endorsed by some influential person, as, for instance, a distinguished soldier.

J. L. C. W. W.—The Society of Antiquaries hold their meetings at Somerset House, London. The secretary is O. Knight Watson, Esq.; by addressing a letter to the latter gentleman, you will probably receive the information you require.

W. POWELL.—You cannot learn photography without tuition, and the person that gives you the lessons will recommend you a manual. There have been several published, and may be obtained of Messrs. Simpkin and Marshall, Stationers' Hall Court.

R. B. J.—You must pass an examination at the College of Preceptors, or apply to the secretary, King's College, London, who will send you a form, by which you will see, that by attending a certain course of evening lectures, and passing an examination, you may take a degree.

BLACK DIAMOND.—We cannot recommend any building society in particular. You must enquire amongst your friends, but take care that they are friends, and do not entrap you into some swindling scheme; for, unfortunately, the latter are but too plentiful.

J. SWITZER.—There is a British consul at Hamburg, namely, George Anseley, Esq. There are many British merchants in the city, and we doubt not, that an enterprising and worthy young man, speaking the language, might obtain a good living; the more especially if provided with good letters of introduction.

OUTSIDE THE DOOR.

How short and dark these winter days,
That come with fall of snow and rain,
With winds that roam the untrodden ways
And sob at dusk outside the pane.

How bleak and lone the bare fields lie,
That in the purple distance merge;
How cheerless looms the leaden sky
Along the dull horizon's verge.

In feather flakes the silent snow
Falls earthward from the chilly cloud,
And wraps the frozen earth below
In wintry whiteness like a cloud.

But what care we for winter's cold,
For rain or snow outside the door,
Who in our hearts, like treasure, hold
Love's deathless summer warmth in store.

G. S.

A BROTHER AND SISTER.—America is so vast a land, being, in fact, the largest division of the globe, that we cannot give you any hope of discovering your sister. You say you have heard from her; if so, address a letter to the post-master of the town from which she wrote, giving him particulars in detail, and enclosing a stamped and addressed envelope.

HAROLD M.—We know of no book which can teach you the grocery business; there is, however, a periodical published, entitled "The Grocer," and that would probably answer your purpose; for in it you will find every information respecting the trade, with regard both to buyers and sellers.

H. J. A.—1. A guide to authors is published by Mr. A. W. Bennett, of Bishopsgate-street, E.C. 2. Do not attempt to publish a volume of poems. Give the first instance, it is doubtful if you would succeed in getting a publisher to take the book, and if you did, you would lose your money. 3. Your verses are declined with thanks for the offer.

ELLEN.—One of the greatest agents in the teaching of children is example; praise of good characters will cause them to imitate their virtues, and the condemnation of such as are bad will make them shun their evil courses. Strive to make them look upon you as a friend, enter into their sports, listen to their little sorrows attentively, and when you make joys for them, share them with them.

J. L. K.—1. Your handwriting is really very good, and, being self-taught, does you credit; but your spelling is very bad indeed, and may, if you do not improve by careful reading, bar your hopes. 2. We cannot recommend you any particular work on book-keeping, but would rather advise you to take a few lessons, and then you would be qualified for a clerk.

M. C. Y.—It is contrary to our rule to give the addresses of persons keeping the kind of offices you mention. One of such exists in most principal towns and are easily found. At the same time we cannot recommend any of them, and would advise you to advertise in the daily papers, or if you cannot afford the expense, to watch closely the servant or situation column of the Times.

JOSEPH LEWIS.—The fact of a person receiving parochial relief does not exempt him from being sued in the County Court. To wit, not long since a parish pauper was sued by a music teacher for lessons she had given to his daughter, and notwithstanding the defendant pleaded being a recipient of parochial relief, he was ordered to pay the plaintiff both debts and costs. Of course, the mode of payment is regulated by the judge.

PAPER-MILLS.—According to Newton, the colours produced by the "spectrum," a term given to the image of the sun or any other luminous body formed on a wall or screen, by the beam of light received through a small hole or slit, and

separated by a prism, are red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet; according to Mayer, the three primary colours are red, yellow, and blue; thus, white is considered no colour at all.

PRINTER.—The advantage of the system of short-hand you mention, over others, is, that when required you can correspond with others; for, unlike other systems, it contains no arbitrary marks. 2. It is not so easily learned as the other system you name, but it is so much more valuable when acquired, that the extra time and trouble should, by a good student, be regarded as bought.

H. DAVIS.—1. You must apply at the office of the Registrar of the court in which the bankrupt appeared. 2. As many times as he desires or his necessities enforce. 3. Take 4oz. of soft soap, 4oz. of honey, the white of an egg, and a wineglassful of gin; mix well together, and scrub the material thoroughly with a rather hard brush, afterwards rinse it in cold water, leave it to drain, and iron whilst quite damp.

CLEMENT.—*Fête de Dieu* means a feast of the Roman Church in honour of the real presence at the Lord's Supper, kept on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday; it was established by Urban IV., in 1261. Boregarinus, Archbishop of Angers, was opposed to the doctrine of transubstantiation when it was first propagated, and to atone for his crime, a yearly procession was made there, which was called *La fête de Dieu*.

AMY M. F. M. R.—1. Take plenty of exercise, drink water generally, and avoid excess of spirits, wine, and fermented liquors. 2. It is generally supposed to produce a change in the system. 3. All vegetables, if rightly taken in their proper season, are wholesome, therefore must have a beneficial effect on the constitution. 4. By reference to a Directory you will obtain the information you require. 5. Handwriting indifferent; requires great practice and care.

BELLA.—The swallow, the harbinger of summer, makes its appearance about the middle of April; the house-martin appears about a week after the swallow, but there are seldom many seen before the beginning of May. It, however, remains later than that species, and is occasionally seen through the first week in November, though the greater part disappear before that time. Previously to migration they congregate upon the roofs of houses and churches.

W. S., twenty-four, in good circumstances.

A., nineteen, tall, dark, a good figure, pretty, and will have 800s. a year when she is twenty-one.

LOVELY ONE, eighteen, tall, dark hair and eyes, and good looking.

LOTTIE N., twenty-five, tall, dark hair and eyes, thoroughly domesticated, no money, but a respectable farmer's daughter.

Respondent must be tall; a young farmer preferred.

MIRNIE DAY, twenty-five, (a servant), fair, dark brown hair, gray eyes, medium height, and of a cheerful disposition. Respondent must be a steady, sober mechanic.

HERBERT ROBERTS, twenty, 5 ft. 8 in., handsome, black hair and moustache. Respondent must be about twenty, good looking, loving, and ladylike in her manners.

LOUISA, seventeen, fair, light hair and eyes, medium height, good figure, and fond of home. Respondent must be tall, dark, good-looking, and affectionate.

MAUD ETHEL, tall, fair, musical, and fond of home. Respondent must be tall, and in receipt of a moderate salary; a tradesman preferred.

WILLIAM, nineteen, 5 ft. 4 in., dark, rather good looking. Respondent must be about 5 ft. 6 in., prepossessing, and respectable.

EDITH FLORENCE C. W., a young lady of fortune. Respondent must be good looking, fair, have a moderate income, and be of good family.

ARCHIBUT AND SURVEYOR, eighteen, 5 ft. 6 in. Respondent must be about sixteen or seventeen, dark eyes, and pretty. Handwriting requires care and practice.

QUARTERMASTER R.N., twenty-eight, and well connected. Respondent must be well educated, under twenty-five, and have a small income of her own.

GEORGE HANDING, twenty, 5 ft. 4 in., dark hair and eyes, and good looking. Respondent must be about twenty, a tradesman's daughter preferred.

W. W. W., thirty, in a Government office, with a salary of 200s. per annum, and dark. Respondent must be about twenty-one, well educated, and tolerably good looking.

LILY, seventeen, tall, fair hair, dark eyes, pretty, very domesticated, and fond of home. Respondent must be tall, dark, good looking, very respectable, and fond of home; a tradesman preferred.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

FREDERICK S.S. is responded to by—"Marion," a farmer's daughter, eighteen, tall, dark, fond of music and singing, has no means, but would make a good wife.

ELLEN by—"O. D. C." twenty, 5 ft. dark brown hair, blue eyes, good looking, fond of home, and in the wine and spirit trade; and—"J. P.," medium height, good looking, and good tempered.

A SLOTTED ONE by—"C. J. W.," twenty-one, 5 ft. 10 in., dark, respectable, and well educated.

SENIOR SHIP'S POLICE by—"O. E. H.," tall, dark brown hair and eyes, high spirited, of a loving disposition, and domesticated.

LILY J. A. by—"J. A.," seventeen, 5 ft. 1 in., in a good position, light hair, blue eyes, very fond of home, but has no fortune.

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